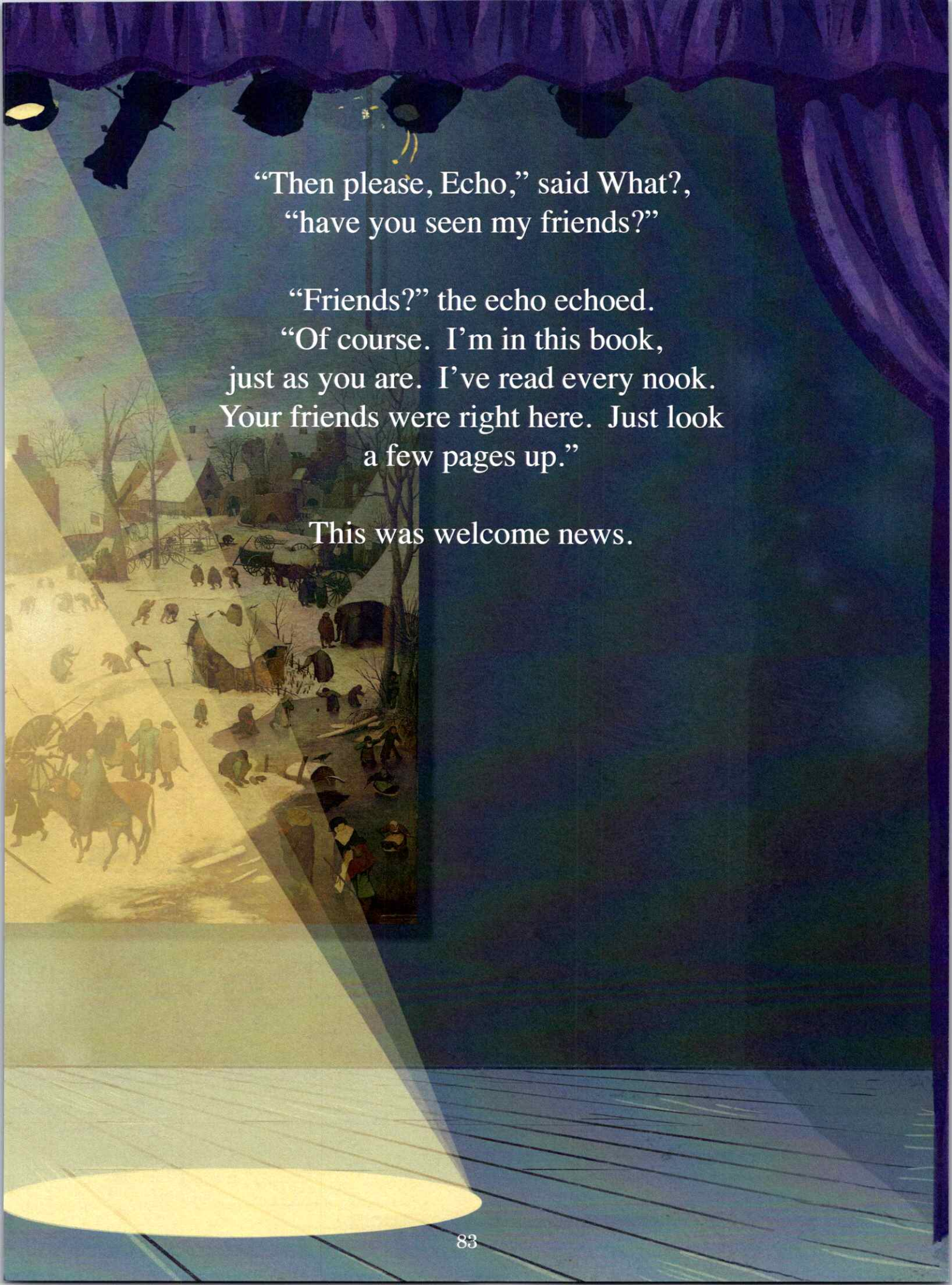




“Then please, Echo,” said What?,
“have you seen my friends?”

“Friends?” the echo echoed.
“Of course. I’m in this book,
just as you are. I’ve read every nook.
Your friends were right here. Just look
a few pages up.”

This was welcome news.

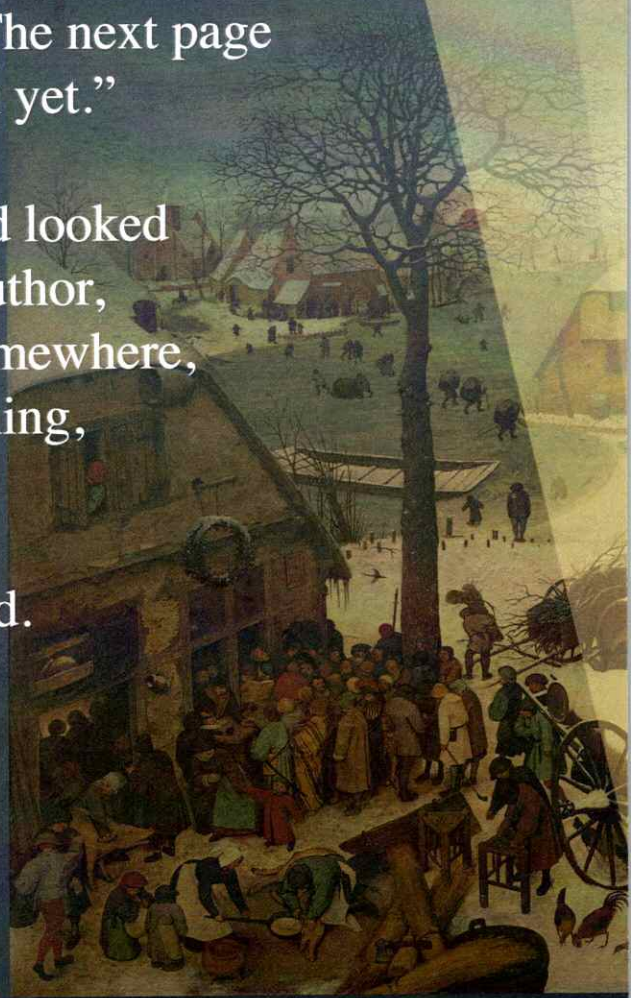


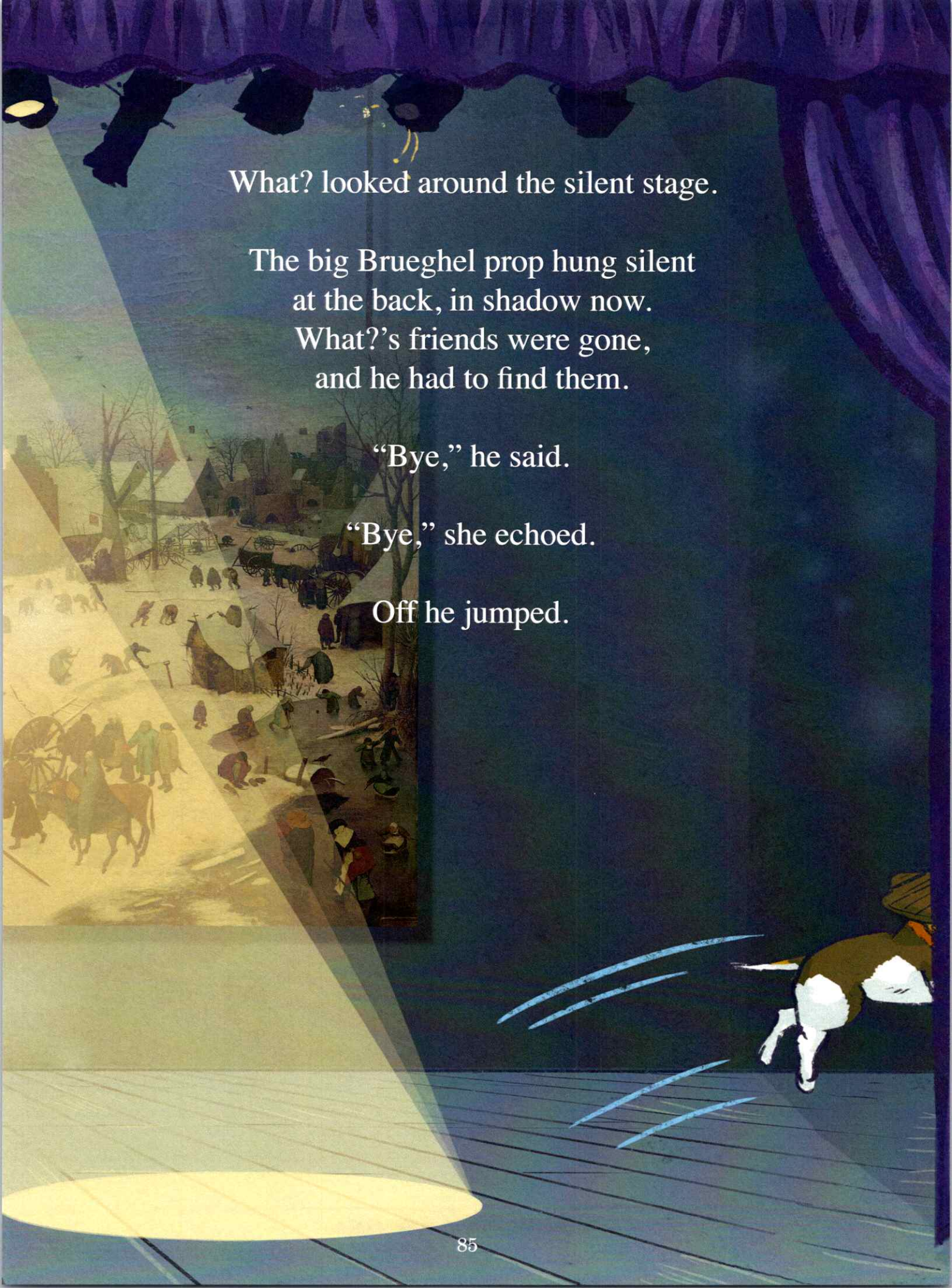
“Then please look at the next page down,”
said What?, “and tell me
where my friends are now.”

“Can’t,” the echo said. “The next page
hasn’t been written yet.”

They both paused and looked
for the invisible author,
who was watching, somewhere,
but he wrote nothing,
except this.

It was awkward.



The background of the page is a dark stage. At the top, several stage lights are visible. A large, detailed painting of a winter village scene, likely Pieter Bruegel the Elder's 'The Fight Between Carnival and Lent', is positioned on the left side of the stage. A bright spotlight shines from the top left, illuminating the painting and the floor. In the bottom right corner, a dog with brown and white fur is captured in mid-jump, with blue motion lines trailing behind it. The floor of the stage is made of wooden planks.

What? looked around the silent stage.

The big Brueghel prop hung silent
at the back, in shadow now.
What?'s friends were gone,
and he had to find them.

"Bye," he said.

"Bye," she echoed.

Off he jumped.