



ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

# The Little Prince



SOON  
TO BE A  
MAJOR  
MOTION  
PICTURE

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# The Little Prince

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY

ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY RICHARD HOWARD



MARINER BOOKS

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT

Boston New York



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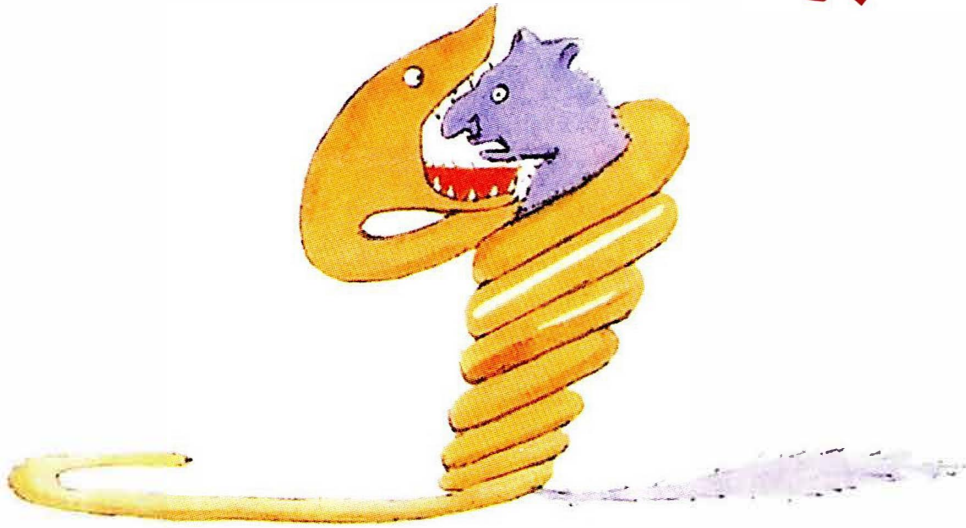
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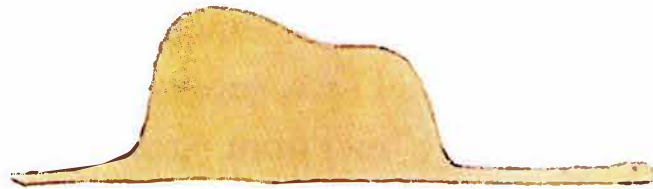


I

ONCE WHEN I WAS SIX I saw a magnificent picture in a book about the jungle, called *True Stories*. It showed a boa constrictor swallowing a wild beast. Here is a copy of the picture.

In the book it said: "Boa constrictors swallow their prey whole, without chewing. Afterward they are no longer able to move, and they sleep during the six months of their digestion."

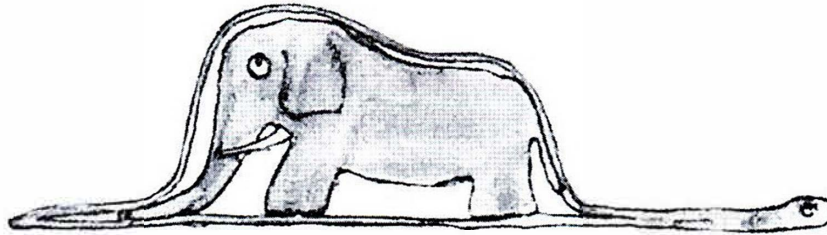
In those days I thought a lot about jungle adventures, and eventually managed to make my first drawing, using a colored pencil. My drawing Number One looked like this:



I showed the grown-ups my masterpiece, and I asked them if my drawing scared them.

They answered, “Why be scared of a hat?”

My drawing was not a picture of a hat. It was a picture of a boa constrictor digesting an elephant. Then I drew the inside of the boa constrictor, so the grown-ups could understand. They always need explanations. My drawing Number Two looked like this:



The grown-ups advised me to put away my drawings of boa constrictors, outside or inside, and apply myself instead to geography, history, arithmetic, and grammar. That is why I abandoned, at the age of six, a magnificent career as an artist. I had been discouraged by the failure of my drawing Number One and of my drawing Number Two. Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves, and it is exhausting for children to have to provide explanations over and over again.

So then I had to choose another career, and I learned to pilot airplanes. I have flown almost everywhere in the world. And, as a matter of fact, geography has been a big help to me. I could tell China from Arizona at first glance, which is very useful if you get lost during the night.

So I have had, in the course of my life, lots of encounters with lots of serious people. I have spent lots of time

with grown-ups. I have seen them at close range . . . which hasn't much improved my opinion of them.

Whenever I encountered a grown-up who seemed to me at all enlightened, I would experiment on him with my drawing Number One, which I have always kept. I wanted to see if he really understood anything. But he would always answer, "That's a hat." Then I wouldn't talk about boa constrictors or jungles or stars. I would put myself on his level and talk about bridge and golf and politics and neckties. And my grown-up was glad to know such a reasonable person.

## II

SO I LIVED all alone, without anyone I could really talk to, until I had to make a crash landing in the Sahara Desert six years ago. Something in my plane's engine had broken, and since I had neither a mechanic nor passengers in the plane with me, I was preparing to undertake the difficult repair job by myself. For me it was a matter of life or death: I had only enough drinking water for eight days.

The first night, then, I went to sleep on the sand a thousand miles from any inhabited country. I was more isolated than a man shipwrecked on a raft in the middle of the ocean. So you can imagine my surprise when I was awakened at daybreak by a funny little voice saying, "Please . . . draw me a sheep . . ."

"What?"



“Draw me a sheep . . .”

I leaped up as if I had been struck by lightning. I rubbed my eyes hard. I stared. And I saw an extraordinary little fellow staring back at me very seriously. Here is the best portrait I managed to make of him, later on. But of course my drawing is much less attractive than my model. This is not my fault. My career as a painter was discouraged at the age of six by the grown-ups, and I had never learned to draw anything except boa constrictors, outside and inside.

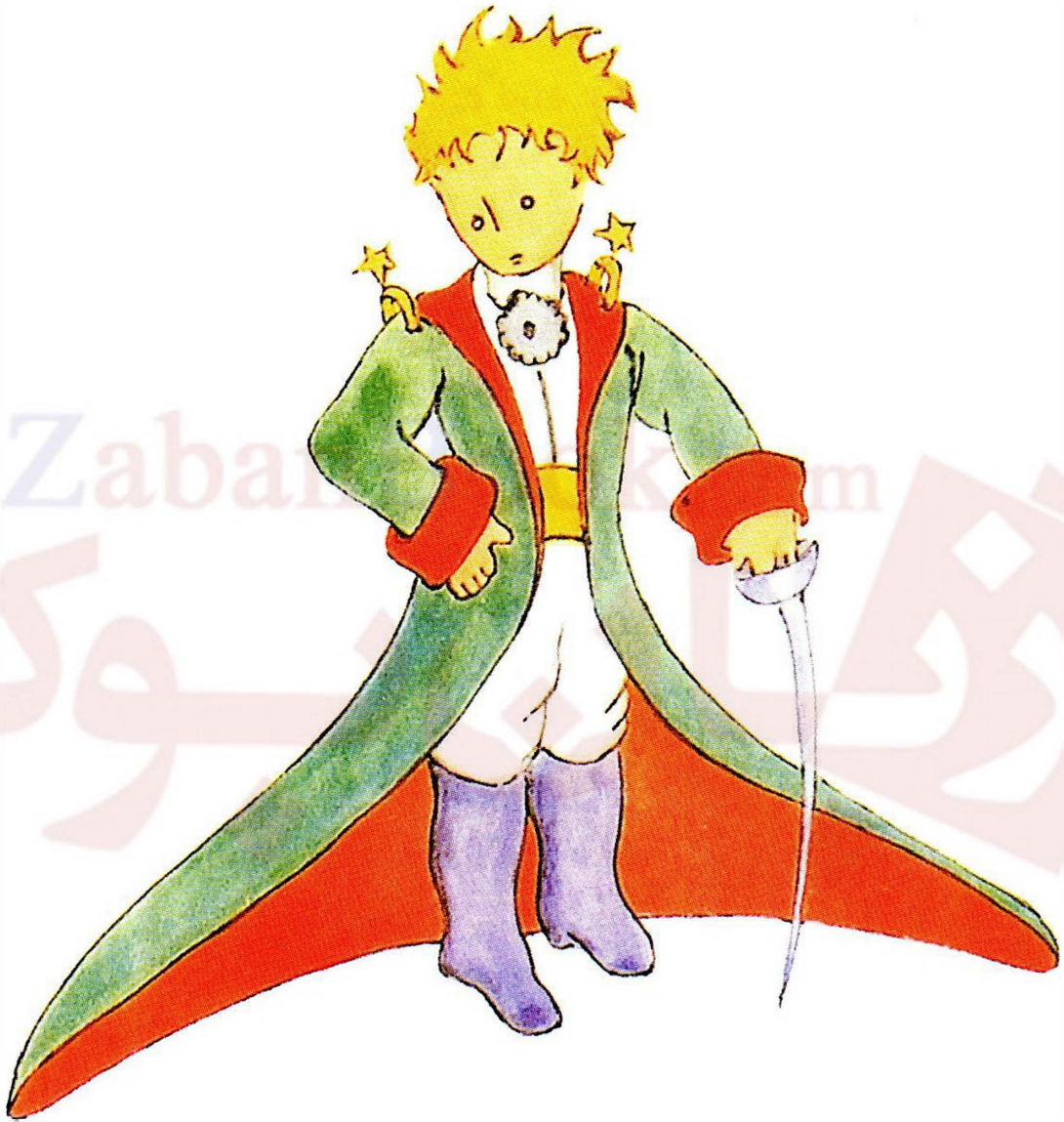
So I stared wide-eyed at this apparition. Don't forget that I was a thousand miles from any inhabited territory. Yet this little fellow seemed to be neither lost nor dying of exhaustion, hunger, or thirst; nor did he seem scared to death. There was nothing in his appearance that suggested a child lost in the middle of the desert a thousand miles from any inhabited territory. When I finally managed to speak, I asked him, “But . . . what are you doing here?”

And then he repeated, very slowly and very seriously, “Please . . . draw me a sheep . . .”

In the face of an overpowering mystery, you don't dare disobey. Absurd as it seemed, a thousand miles from all inhabited regions and in danger of death, I took a scrap of paper and a pen out of my pocket. But then I remembered that I had mostly studied geography, history, arithmetic, and grammar, and I told the little fellow (rather crossly) that I didn't know how to draw.

He replied, “That doesn't matter. Draw me a sheep.”

Since I had never drawn a sheep, I made him one of

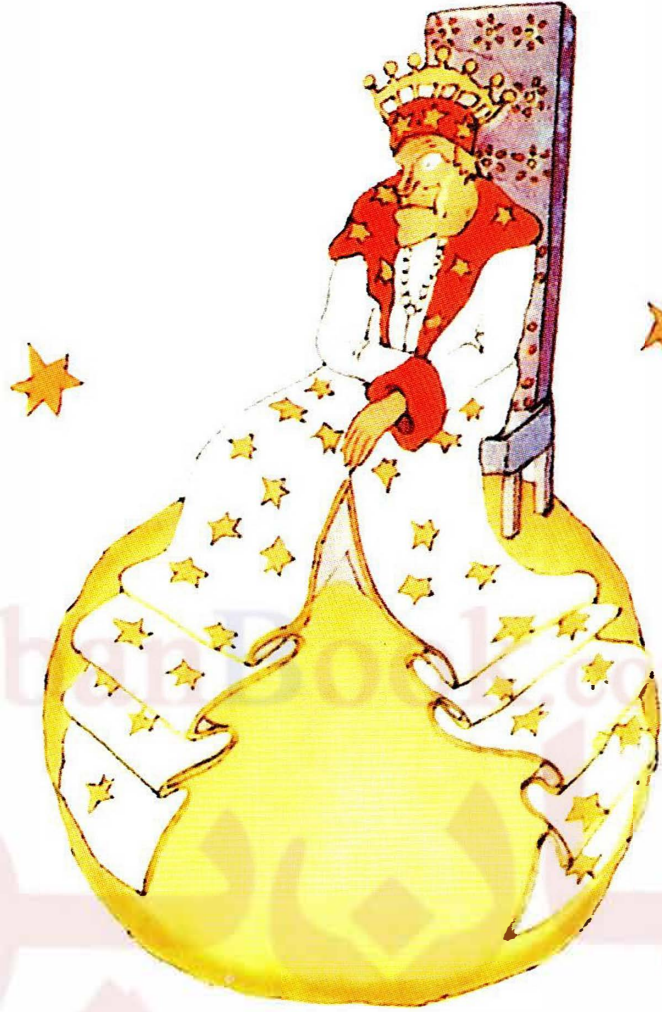


*Here is the best portrait I managed to make of him, later on.*





The Baobabs



The first one was inhabited by a king. Wearing purple and ermine, he was sitting on a simple yet majestic throne.

“Ah! Here’s a subject!” the king exclaimed when he caught sight of the little prince.

And the little prince wondered, *How can he know who I am if he’s never seen me before?* He didn’t realize that for kings, the world is extremely simplified: All men are subjects.







“Drinking,” replied the drunkard, with a gloomy expression.

“Why are you drinking?” the little prince asked.

“To forget,” replied the drunkard.

“To forget what?” inquired the little prince, who was already feeling sorry for him.

“To forget that I’m ashamed,” confessed the drunkard, hanging his head.

“What are you ashamed of?” inquired the little prince, who wanted to help.

“Of drinking!” concluded the drunkard, withdrawing into silence for good. And the little prince went on his way, puzzled.





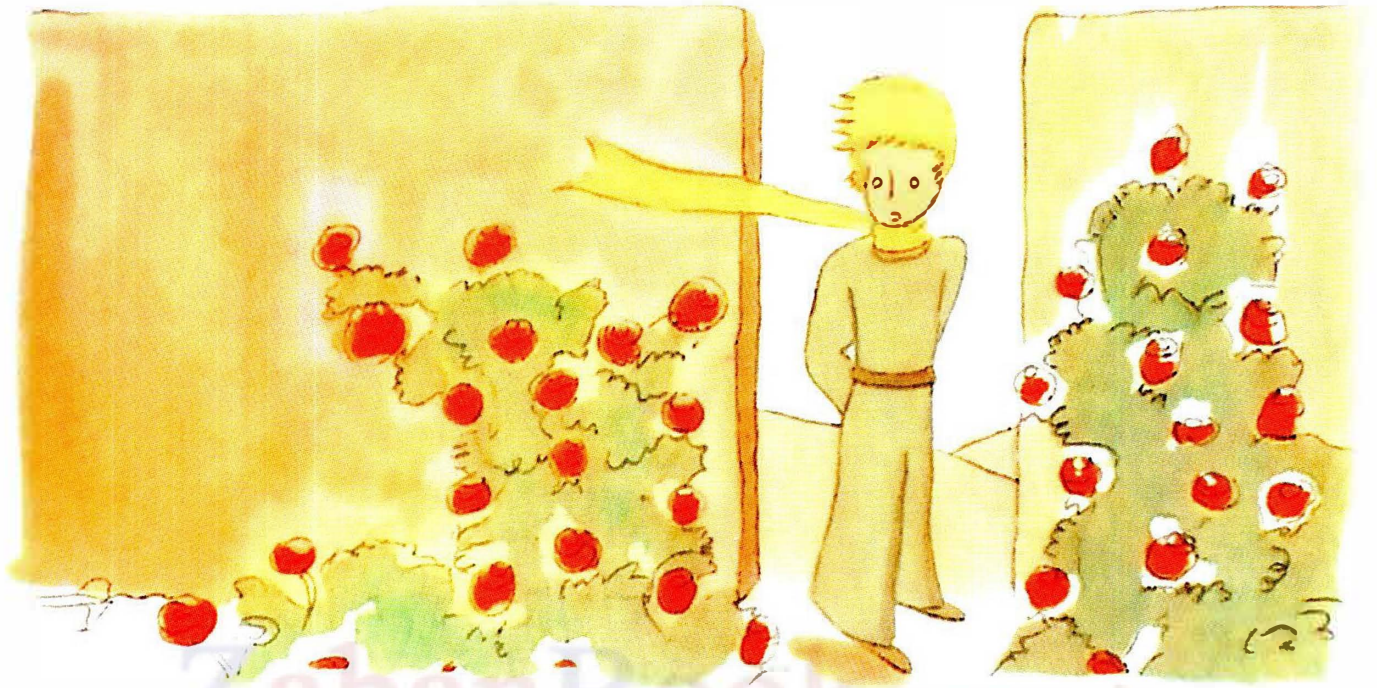


*"It's a terrible job I have."*



*“You’re a funny creature, no thicker than a finger.”*





*She would be very annoyed, he said to himself, if she saw this . . . She would cough terribly and pretend to be dying, to avoid being laughed at. And I'd have to pretend to be nursing her; otherwise, she'd really let herself die in order to humiliate me.*

*And then he said to himself, I thought I was rich because I had just one flower, and all I own is an ordinary rose. That and my three volcanoes, which come up to my knee, one of which may be permanently extinct. It doesn't make me much of a prince . . . And he lay down in the grass and wept.*

## XXI

IT WAS THEN that the fox appeared.

"Good morning," said the fox.



“No,” said the little prince, “I’m looking for friends. What does *tamed* mean?”

“It’s something that’s been too often neglected. It means, ‘to create ties’ . . .”

“‘To create ties’?”

“That’s right,” the fox said. “For me you’re only a little boy just like a hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need of you. And you have no need of me, either. For you I’m only a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But if you tame me, we’ll need each other. You’ll be the only boy in the world for me. I’ll be the only fox in the world for you . . .”

“I’m beginning to understand,” the little prince said. “There’s a flower . . . I think she’s tamed me . . .”

“Possibly,” the fox said. “On Earth, one sees all kinds of things.”

“Oh, this isn’t on Earth,” the little prince said.

The fox seemed quite intrigued. “On another planet?”

“Yes.”

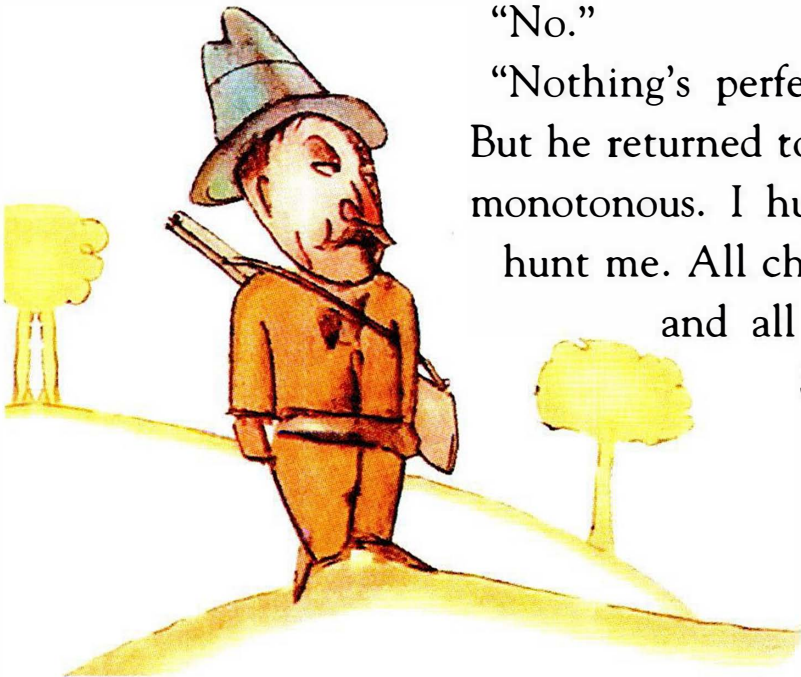
“Are there hunters on that planet?”

“No.”

“Now that’s interesting. And chickens?”

“No.”

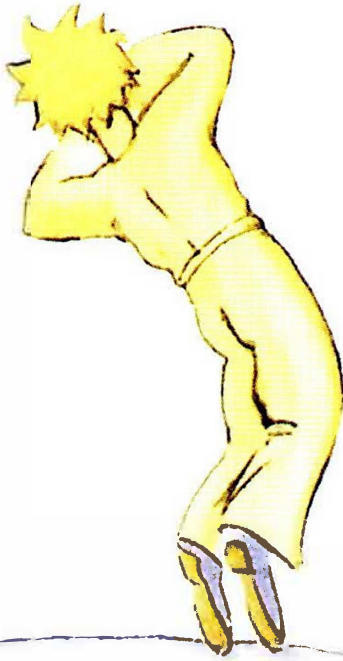
“Nothing’s perfect,” sighed the fox. But he returned to his idea. “My life is monotonous. I hunt chickens; people hunt me. All chickens are just alike, and all men are just alike. So I’m rather bored.





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*“If you come at four in the afternoon, I’ll begin to be happy by three.”*



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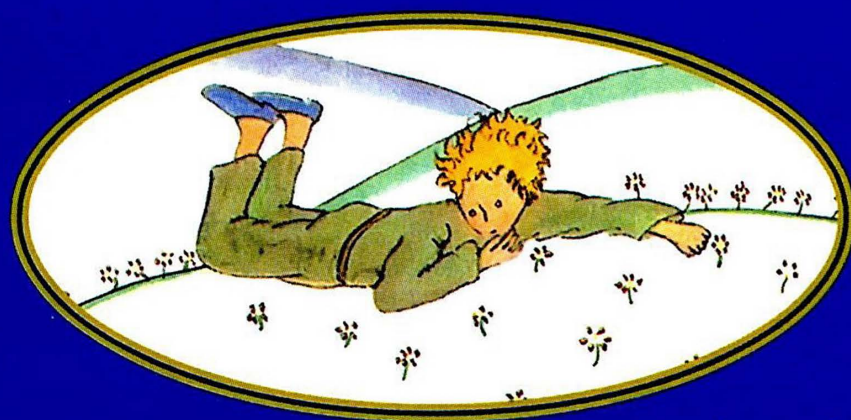
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*He fell gently, the way a tree falls. There wasn't even a sound. . . .*



**A** pilot stranded in the desert awakes one morning to see, standing before him, the most extraordinary little fellow. "Please," asks the stranger, "draw me a sheep." And the pilot realizes that when life's events are too difficult to understand, there is no choice but to succumb to their mysteries. He pulls out pencil and paper... And thus begins this wise and enchanting fable that, in teaching the secret of what is really important in life, has changed forever the world for its readers.

Few stories are as widely read and as universally cherished by children and adults alike as *The Little Prince*, presented here in a stunning new translation with carefully restored artwork. The definitive edition of a worldwide classic, it will capture the hearts of readers of all ages.



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