

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry  
*The Little Prince*

*Translated by*  
**B. ORHAN DOĞAN**  
**BRENDA MILFORD**

*Saint-Exupéry's*  
*Original Color Illustrations Included*

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*“And now here is my secret. It's very simple: One sees clearly only with the heart. The most important things are invisible to the eye.” (The Fox)*

*“When you look up at the sky at night, since I'll be living on one of them, since I'll be laughing on one of them, to you it will sound as if all the stars are laughing.” (The Little Prince)*

**The Little Prince** is a story written and illustrated by French writer, poet, and pioneering aviator Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. First published in 1943, the book has since been translated into more than 250 languages and has become one of the best-selling books to date.

**The Little Prince** is both for children due to its illustrations and imaginative fairy-tale quality and for adults (since they were children first) due to its several observations about life and human nature.

It tells the story of a pilot and the young prince he meets, who has fallen to Earth from an asteroid.

The story tries to find out the secret to what is really important in life and urges us to read at many different levels of meaning, from fairy tale to deeper secrets of reality.

# Antoine de Saint-Exupéry & The Little Prince

*The Little Prince* (French: *Le Petit Prince*), first published in 1943, is the most famous work of French writer, poet, and pioneering aviator Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1900–1944).

*The Little Prince* is the fourth most-translated book in the world and was voted the best book of the 20th century in France.



After the outbreak of the Second World War, Saint-Exupéry was exiled to North America. In the midst of personal upheavals and failing health, he produced almost half of the writings for which he would be remembered, including a tender tale of loneliness, friendship and love, in the form of a little prince fallen to Earth.

*The Little Prince* is a poetic tale, with watercolor illustrations by the author, in which a pilot stranded in the desert meets a little prince fallen to Earth from a tiny asteroid. The story is philosophical and includes social criticism, remarking on the strangeness of the adult world.

Though ostensibly styled as a children's book, *The Little Prince* makes several observations about life and human nature. For example, Saint-Exupéry tells of a fox meeting the little prince during his travels on Earth. The story's essence is contained in the lines uttered by the fox to the little prince: *"One sees clearly only with the heart. The most important things are invisible to the eyes."* Other key thematic messages are articulated by the fox, such as: *"You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed."* and *"It's the time you spent on your rose that makes your rose so important."* The fox's messages deal with human relationships.

The narrator explains that, as a young boy, he once drew a picture of a boa constrictor with an elephant digesting in its stomach; however, every adult who saw the picture would mistakenly interpret it as a drawing of a hat. Whenever the narrator would try to correct this confusion, he was ultimately advised to set aside drawing and take up a more practical hobby. The narrator laments the lack of creative understanding displayed by adults.



# Leon Werth

Saint-Exupéry met Léon Werth (1878-1955), a writer and art critic, in 1931. Leon Werth soon became Saint-Exupéry's closest friend outside of his Aeropostale associates.

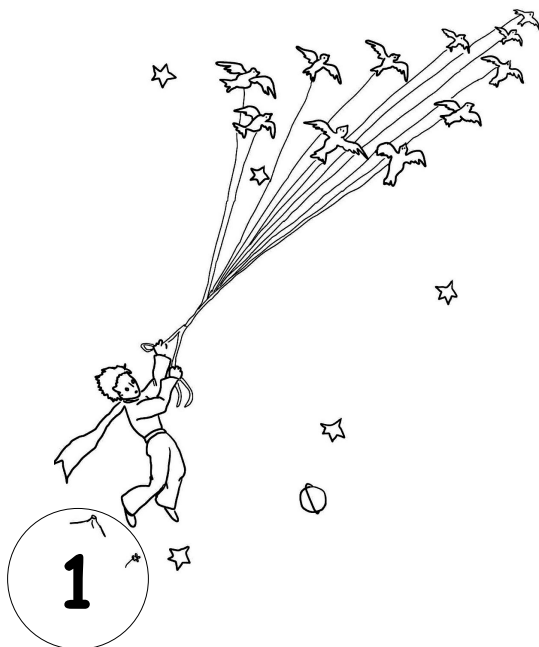
Saint-Exupéry dedicated two books to him, *Lettre à un otage* (*Letter to a Hostage*) and *Le Petit Prince* (*The Little Prince*). At the beginning of the Second World War while writing *The Little Prince*, Saint-Exupéry lived in his downtown New York City apartment, thinking of his native France and his friends. Werth spent the war unobtrusively in Saint-Amour, his village in the Jura, a mountainous region near Switzerland where he was "alone, cold and hungry".

Saint-Exupéry's aircraft disappeared over the Mediterranean in July 1944. The following month, Werth learned of his friend's disappearance from a radio broadcast. Without having yet heard of *The Little Prince*, in November, Werth discovered that Saint-Exupéry had published a book the previous year in the U.S., which he had illustrated himself, and that it was dedicated to him.

## *To Leon Werth*

*I ask children to forgive me for dedicating this book to a grown-up. I have a serious excuse: this grown-up is the best friend I have in the world. I have another excuse: this grown-up can understand everything, even books for children. I have a third excuse: he lives in France where he is hungry and cold. He needs to be comforted. If all these excuses are not enough then I want to dedicate this book to the child whom this grown-up once was. All grown-ups were children first. (But few of them remember it.) So I correct my dedication:*

*To Leon Werth,  
When he was a little boy*



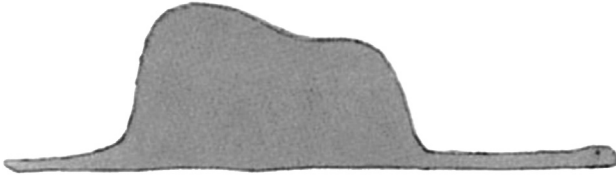
Once, when I was six years old, I saw a magnificent picture in a book, called *True Stories*, about the primeval forest. It was a picture of a boa constrictor swallowing a wild animal. Here is a copy of the drawing.



In the book it said: *“Boa constrictors swallow their prey whole, without chewing it. Afterwards they are unable to move, and they sleep for six months they need for digestion.”*



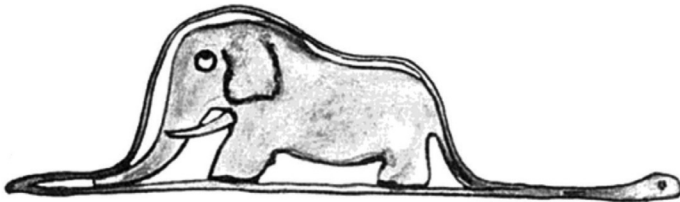
Then I pondered deeply over the adventures of the jungle, and eventually managed to make my first drawing, with a colored pencil. My Drawing Number One. It looked something like this:



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

But they answered: *"Frighten? Why should anyone 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. So then I drew the inside of the boa constrictor, to help the grown-ups understand. They always need to have things explained. My drawing Number Two looked like this:



The grown-ups advised me to put away my drawings of boa constrictors, whether from the inside or the outside, and devote myself instead to geography, history, arithmetic, and grammar. That is why I gave up, at the age of six, a magnificent career as a painter. I had been

*“But where do you think he would go?”*

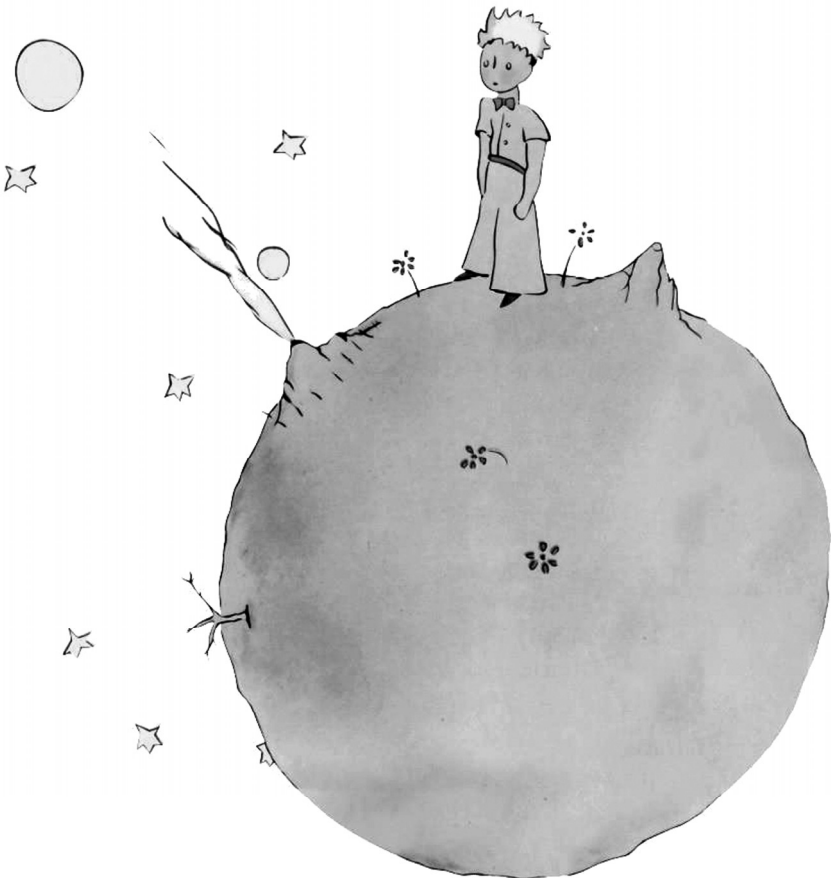
*“Anywhere. Straight ahead...”*

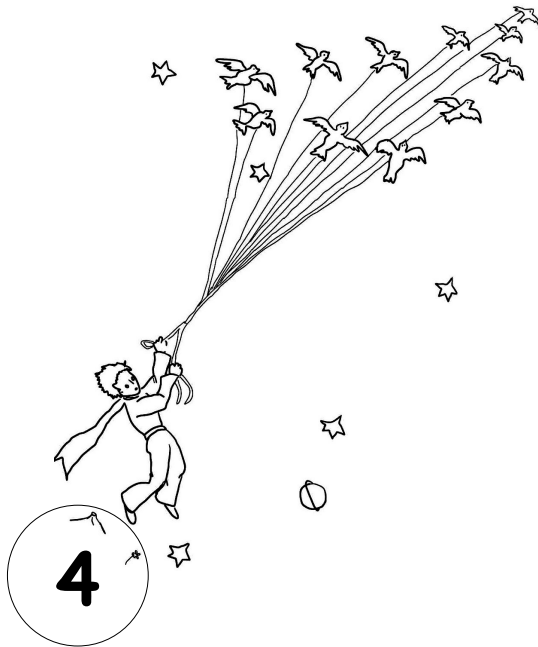
Then the little prince remarked solemnly:

*“That doesn't matter. Where I live, everything is so small!”*

And he added, perhaps a little sadly:

*“Straight ahead of him, nobody can go very far...”*



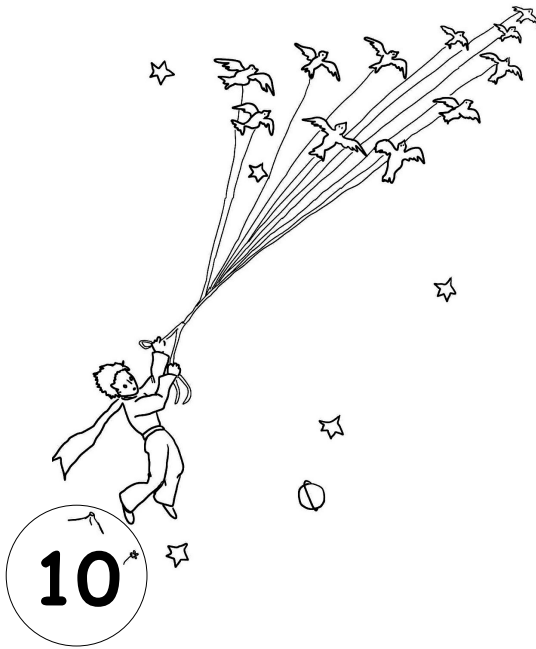


I had thus learned a second very important thing: this was that the planet he came from was hardly bigger than a house!

That did not really surprise me much. I knew very well that in addition to the great planets like Earth, Jupiter, Mars, and Venus, which have been given names, there are also hundreds of others that are sometimes so small that it's very difficult to see them through a telescope... When an astronomer discovers one of them, he gives it a number instead of a name. He might call it, for example, '*Asteroid 325*'.

I have good reason to believe that the planet the little prince came from is Asteroid B-612.

This asteroid has only once been seen through the telescope in 1909 by a Turkish astronomer.



He found himself in the vicinity of the Asteroids 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, and 330. He began, therefore, by visiting them, to keep himself busy and to learn something.

The first one was inhabited by a king. Clad in royal purple and ermine, he was seated upon a simple yet majestic throne.

*“Ah! Here is a subject,”* exclaimed the king, when he noticed the little prince.

And the little prince asked himself:

*“How can he know who I am if he has never seen me before?”*

He did not know that, for kings, the world is really simple: All men are subjects.

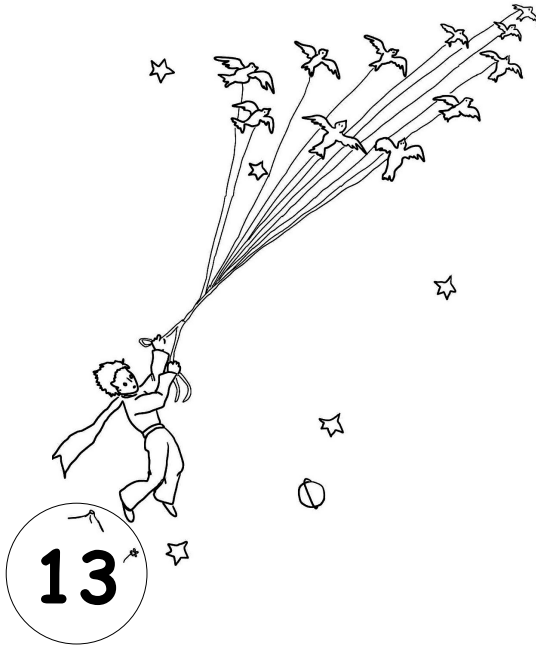


*“Approach, so that I may see you better,”* said the king, very proud of being a king for someone at last.

The little prince looked around for a place to sit down, but the planet was covered by the king's magnificent ermine robe. So he remained standing, and since he was fatigued, he yawned.

*“It is contrary to etiquette to yawn in a king's presence,”* the monarch said to him. *“I forbid you to do so.”*

*“I can't help it. I can't stop myself,”* replied the little prince, quite embarrassed. *“I've made a long journey, and I haven't had any sleep...”*



The fourth planet belonged to a businessman. This man was so busy that he did not even raise his head at the little prince's arrival.

*"Hello,"* the little prince said to him. *"Your cigarette has gone out."*

*"Three and two make five. Five and seven, twelve. Twelve and three, fifteen. Hello. Fifteen and seven, twenty-two. Twenty-two and six, twenty-eight. I haven't time to light it again. Twenty-six and five, thirty-one. Phew! Then that makes five hundred and one million, six hundred and twenty-two thousand, seven hundred and thirty-one."*

*"Five hundred and one million what?"*

*"Huh? You're still there? Five hundred and one million... I don't remember... I have so much work to do!"*

*I'm a serious man. I do not amuse myself with nonsense. Two and five make seven..."*

*"Five hundred and one million what?" repeated the little prince, who had never in his life let go of a question once he had asked it.*

The businessman raised his head.

*"For the fifty-four years that I have inhabited this planet, I have been disturbed only three times. The first time was twenty-two years ago, when a beetle fell from who knows where. It made a terrible noise, and I made four mistakes in my addition. The second time was eleven years ago, when I was disturbed by an attack of rheumatism. I don't get enough exercise. I haven't time to take strolls. I'm a serious person. The third time... well, this is it! I was saying, then, five hundred and one million..."*

*"Million what?"*



**Saint-Exupéry's  
Original Color  
Illustrations**



