



ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

The Little Prince



A NEW
TRANSLATION
OF THE BELOVED
CLASSIC WITH
RESTORED
ORIGINAL ART



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."

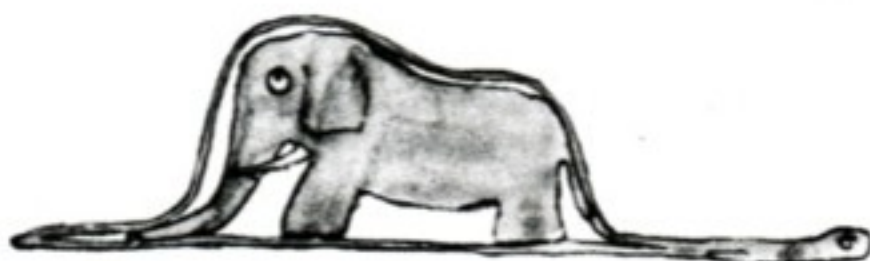
In those days I thought a lot about jungle adventures, and eventually managed to make my first drawing, using a colored pencil. My drawing Number One looked like this:



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?"

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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