

The Little Prince

The narrator begins with a discussion on the nature of grown-ups and their inability to perceive especially important things. As a test to determine if a grown-up is enlightened and like a child, he shows them a picture that he drew at the age of 6 depicting a snake which has eaten an elephant. The grown-ups always reply that the picture depicts a hat, and so he knows to talk of "reasonable" things to them, rather than fanciful.

The narrator becomes a [pilot](#), and, one day, his plane crashes in the [Sahara](#), far from civilization. He has 8 days of water supply and must fix his airplane to be saved.

In the middle of the desert, the narrator is unexpectedly greeted by a young boy who is nicknamed as "the little prince". The prince has golden hair, a lovable laugh, and will repeat questions until they are answered.

Upon encountering the narrator, the little prince asks him to draw a sheep. The narrator first shows him his old picture of the elephant inside the snake, which, to the narrator's surprise, the prince interprets correctly. After three failed attempts at drawing a sheep, the frustrated narrator simply draws a box (crate), claiming that the sheep the prince wants is inside the box. Again, to the narrator's surprise, the prince exclaims that this was exactly the drawing he wanted.

Over the course of eight days stranded in the desert, while the narrator attempts to repair his plane, the little prince recounts the story of his life.

The prince begins by describing life on his tiny home planet: in effect, a house-sized [asteroid](#) known as "[B 612](#)" on Earth. The asteroid's most prominent features are three minuscule [volcanoes](#) (two active, and one [dormant or extinct](#)) as well as a variety of plants.

The prince describes spending his earlier days cleaning the volcanoes and weeding unwanted seeds and sprigs that infest his planet's soil; in particular, pulling out [baobab](#) trees that are constantly on the verge of overrunning the surface. If the baobabs are not rooted out the moment they are recognized, it may be put off until it is too late and the tree has grown too large to remove, its roots having a catastrophic effect on the tiny planet.

The prince wants a sheep to eat the undesirable plants, but worries it will also eat plants with thorns.

The prince tells of his love for a vain and silly rose that began growing on the asteroid's surface some time ago. The rose is given to pretension, exaggerating ailments to gain attention and have the prince care for her. The prince says he nourished the rose and attended her, making a screen or glass globe to protect her from the cold wind, watering her, and keeping off the caterpillars.

Although the prince fell in love with the rose, he also began to feel that she was taking advantage of him and he resolved to leave the planet to explore the rest of the universe. Upon their goodbyes, the rose is serious and apologizes that she failed to show she loved him and that they'd both been silly. She wishes him well and turns down his desire to leave her in the glass globe, saying she will protect herself.

The prince laments that he did not understand how to love his rose while he was with her and should have listened to her kind actions, rather than her vain words.

The prince has since visited six other [planets](#), each of which was inhabited by a single, irrational, narrow-minded adult, each meant to critique an element of society. They include:

- A king with no subjects, who only issues orders that can be followed, such as commanding the sun to set at sunset.
- A narcissistic man who only wants the praise which comes from admiration and being the most-admirable person on his otherwise uninhabited planet.
- A drunkard who drinks to forget the shame of drinking.
- A businessman who is blind to the beauty of the stars and instead endlessly counts and catalogues them in order to "own" them all (critiquing [materialism](#))
- A lamplighter on a planet so small, a full day lasts a minute. He wastes his life blindly following [orders](#) to extinguish and relight the lamppost every 30 seconds to correspond with his planet's day and night.
- An elderly [geographer](#) who has never been anywhere, or seen any of the things he records, providing a caricature of [specialization](#) in the contemporary world.

It is the [geographer](#) who tells the prince that his rose is an [ephemeral](#) being, which is not recorded, and recommends that the prince next visit the planet [Earth](#).

The visit to Earth begins with a deeply pessimistic appraisal of humanity. The six absurd people the prince encountered earlier comprise, according to the narrator, just about the entire adult world. On earth there were

111 kings ... 7000 geographers, 900,000 businessmen, 7,500,000 tipplers, 311,000,000 conceited men; that is to say, about 2,000,000,000 grown-ups.

Since the prince landed in a desert, he believed that Earth was uninhabited. He then met a yellow snake that claimed to have the power to return him to his home, if he ever wished to return. The prince next met a desert flower, who told him that she had only seen a handful of men in this part of the world and that they had no roots, letting the wind blow them around and living hard lives. After climbing the highest mountain he had ever seen, the prince hoped to see the whole of Earth, thus finding the people; however, he saw only the enormous, desolate landscape. When the prince called out, his echo answered him, which he interpreted as the voice of a boring person who only repeats what another says.

The prince encountered a whole row of rosebushes, becoming downcast at having once thought that his own rose was unique and that she had lied. He began to feel that he was not a great prince at all, as his planet contained only three tiny volcanoes and a flower that he now thought of as common. He lay down on the grass and wept, until a [fox](#) came along.

The fox desired to be tamed and teaches the prince how to tame him.

By being tamed, something goes from being ordinary and just like all the others, to be special and unique. There are drawbacks since the connection can lead to sadness and longing when apart.

From the fox, the prince learns that his rose was indeed unique and special because she was the object of the prince's love and time; he had "tamed" her, and now she was more precious than all of the roses he had seen in the garden.

Upon their sad departing, the fox imparts a secret: important things can only be seen with the heart, not the eyes.

The prince finally meets two people from Earth:

- A railway switchman who told him how passengers constantly rushed from one place to another aboard trains, never satisfied with where they were and not knowing what they were after; only the children among them ever bothered to look out the windows.
- A merchant who talked to the prince about his product, a pill that eliminated the need to drink for a week, saving people 53 minutes.

Back in the present moment, it is the eighth day after the narrator's plane crash and the narrator and the prince are dying of thirst. The prince has become visibly morose and saddened over his recollections and longs to return home and see his flower.

The prince finds a well, saving the pair. The narrator later finds the prince talking to the snake, discussing his return home and his desire to see his rose again, whom he worries has been left to fend for herself. The prince bids an emotional farewell to the narrator and states that if it looks as though he has died, it is only because his body was too heavy to take with him to his planet. The prince warns the narrator not to watch him leave, as it will upset him. The narrator, realizing what will happen, refuses to leave the prince's side. The prince consoles the narrator by saying that he only need look at the stars to think of the prince's lovable laughter, and that it will seem as if all the stars are laughing. The prince then walks away from the narrator and allows the snake to bite him, soundlessly falling down.

The next morning, the narrator is unable to find the prince's body. He finally manages to repair his airplane and leave the desert. It is left up to the reader to determine if the prince returned home, or died.

The story ends with a drawing of the landscape where the prince and the narrator met and where the snake took the prince's corporeal life. The narrator requests to be immediately contacted by anyone in that area encountering a small person with golden curls who refuses to answer any questions.