

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

The Little Prince



**THE LITTLE PRINCE / ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY**

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# The Little Prince

Fransızca aslından çeviren: Pınar Başer



TO LEON WERTH

I apologize to children for dedicating this book to a grown-up. I have an important reason for doing so: I have never had a better friend than this man. I have another reason: this man can understand everything, even books written for children. I also have a third reason: he currently lives in France where he is hungry and cold, so he needs to be comforted. If all these reasons are not satisfying enough, then I will dedicate this book to the child who this man once was. All these grown-ups once were little children—although they rarely remember the fact. So I correct my dedication:

To LEON WERTH when he was a little boy.

## **Pınar Başer**

She graduated from Istanbul University English Language and Literature Department in 2006. She taught English at TED Colleges. In 2011, she got her Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant scholarship and taught Turkish at Five Colleges- Massachusetts-USA. She has worked as an English Instructor at Middle East Technical University Northern Cyprus Campus School of Foreign Languages.

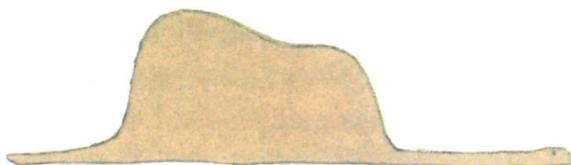


## I

When I was six years old, I saw a marvelous illustration in a book called *True Stories*, about an ancient forest. It showed a boa constrictor swallowing an animal. Here is a copy of the illustration above.

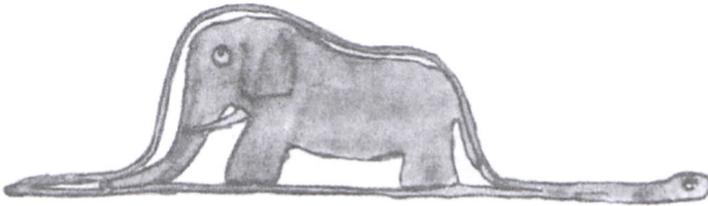
The book said: “Boa constrictors swallow their prey whole, without chewing first. Then they are not able to move and they sleep for six months as they digest.”

I thought long and hard about the adventures of the jungle, and then, with a crayon, I managed to draw my first drawing. My first drawing looked like this:



I showed my masterpiece to some of the grown-ups and asked if my drawing frightened them. They replied: “Why would a hat be frightening?”

My drawing was not a hat. It represented a boa constrictor digesting an elephant. Then I drew the inside of the boa constrictor so that the grown-ups could understand. You need to explain everything to grown-ups. My second drawing was like this:



The grown-ups advised me to give up drawing the insides or outsides of boa constrictors and to focus instead on studying geography, history, arithmetic and grammar. Thus I abandoned, at age six, a magnificent artistic career. I had been discouraged by the failure of drawings number 1 and 2. Grown-ups can never understand things fully by themselves; it is very tiresome for us children to explain things to them.

So, I chose another profession and became a pilot. I have

pretty much flown everywhere in the world. Geography, it's true, served me well. I can tell China from Arizona at first glance. Geography is very helpful if you get lost in the darkness of the night.

I have had many relationships with many important people. I have spent a lot of time with adults. I have gotten to know them very well. That has not improved my opinion.

When I met someone who seemed clear-headed and smart, I showed him my Drawing Number One, which I always kept on me. I wanted to know if he had the gift of true perception. But whoever it was, he or she, replied the same: "That is a hat."

Then I would not speak to them about boa constrictors, ancient forests, or stars. I would bring myself to their level. I would talk to them about bridge, and golf, and ties and so. And they would be pleased to have met such a sensible man like myself.

## II

I lived all alone, with no real friend to talk to, until my plane crashed in the Sahara Desert six years ago. Something was broken in the engine. Since there was not a mechanic or passengers on the plane, I had to manage the difficult repairs all on my own. It was a matter of life and death for me. I had just enough drinking water to last eight days.

The first night, I slept on the desert a thousand miles away from the nearest village. I was more isolated than a sailor stranded on a raft in the middle of the ocean. You can imagine how I was surprised, at sunrise, when I was woken up by a little funny voice. The voice said: “Please, can you draw me a sheep?”

“Huh?”

“Draw me a sheep.”

I jumped to my feet as if I had been struck by lightning. I blinked my eyes hard. I carefully looked around. And I saw

a little extraordinary fellow looking at me seriously. Here is the best portrait that, much later, I managed to make of him. But my drawing is most certainly less adorable than its model.

That is not my fault. The grown-ups discouraged my art career when I was six. And apart from the insides and outsides of a boa constrictor, I was not able learn how to draw.

Thus, I regarded this apparition with astonishment. Remember, I was one thousand miles away from the nearest village. But the little fellow did not seem to be lost, nor tired, nor dying of hunger, thirst, or fear.

THE LITTLE PRINCE



He also did not give the impression of a child lost in the middle of a desert one thousand miles away from any human habitation. When I was finally managed to speak, I said:

“But...what are you doing here?”

And he repeated then very gently his words as if he were uttering something of great importance:

“If you please... draw me a sheep.”

When the mystery is too impressive, one does not dare disobey. I know it sounds absurd, but even though I was a thousand miles away from the nearest habitation and face to face with death itself, I took a sheet of paper and a fountain pen out of my pocket. At this exact moment, I remembered how I had specialized in studying only geography, history, arithmetic and grammar, and I told the little guy (somewhat crankily) that I could not draw. He replied:

“It doesn’t matter. Just draw me a sheep.”

Since I had never drawn a sheep, I drew for him instead something I could draw. It was the boa constrictor from the outside. But he replied:

“No! No! I do not want an elephant inside a boa constrictor. A snake is very dangerous, and as for an elephant, it takes up too much space. Everything is very small where I live. I want a sheep. Just draw me a sheep.”

I drew a sheep. He carefully examined the drawing and said:



“No. This sheep looks weak and sick. Draw me another.”

So I drew another. My friend smiled in a gentle and indulgent manner:

“As you can see, this is not a sheep. It is a ram. Look at his horns.”

So I redid my drawing.

But he refused it, just like the others.



“This one is too old. I want a sheep that will live for a long time.”

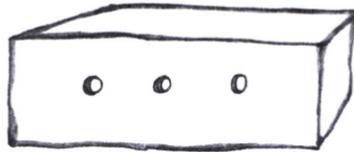


Lacking patience because I wanted to start taking the engine apart soon, I scribbled the drawing below.

“The sheep you want is inside this crate,” I said.

I was surprised when the little critic’s face lit up.

“This is exactly what I wanted. Do you think this sheep will eat a lot of grass?”



“Why?”

“Because where I live everything is small.”

“There will be enough grass for him. I have given you a tiny sheep.”

He leaned over the drawing.

“Not as small as that... Look! He’s asleep.”

That is how I became friends with the little prince.

### III

It took me a while before I understood where he came from. The little prince, who had asked me a lot of questions, did not seem to hear any of mine. Little by little his casual remarks revealed everything. The first time he saw my plane, for example (I will not draw my plane as such a drawing is too complicated for me), he asked:

“What is that thing?”

“It can fly. It’s a plane. My plane.”

I was proud to tell him I knew how to fly. Then he exclaimed:

“How? You have fallen from the sky?”

“Yes,” I said humbly.

“Ah, that’s funny...”

And the little prince chuckled, which I found very annoying. I would like my misfortunes to be taken seriously. Then he added:

“So, you come from the sky, as well. Which planet are you from?”

Immediately I caught a faint glimpse into the mystery of his presence and I abruptly asked:

“So, you come from another planet?”

But he did not respond. He shook his head gently, without taking his eyes off of my plane.

“You can’t have traveled too far with this one anyway...” And he sank into a long daydream. Then, taking my sheep drawing from his pocket, he started examining his treasure.

You can imagine how I was intrigued by the words ‘other planets’ that he let slip out. So I tried hard to learn more:

“Where are you from, my little fellow? Where is home? Where do you want to take your sheep?”

After a silent contemplation he answered:

“It is a good thing you have given it a crate so that at night he can stay there.”

“Of course. I will also give you a leash

to attach to him during the day, if you behave, and a post, too, so that you can tie him to it.” This idea shocked the little prince:

“Tie him! That’s ridiculous!”

