APPENDICES

The Biography of Antoine De Saint

Antoine De Saint was born in Lyon in an aristocratic family which could trace its lineage back several centuries, the third of five children of Marie de Fonscolombe and comte Jean de Saint Exupery. His father was an executive of the Le Soleil insurance brokerage, who died of a stroke in Lyon's La Foux train station before his son's fourth birthday. His father's death would greatly impact the entire family, changing Saint-Exupery’s status to that of an "impoverished aristocrat".

After failing his final exams at a preparatory Naval Academy (intentionally, some believe), Saint-Exupery entered the Ecole des Beaux-Arts as an auditor to study architecture for fifteen months, again without graduating, and then fell into the habit of accepting odd jobs. In 1921, he began his military service with the 2e Regiment de chasseurs à cheval (2nd Regiment of Light Cavalry) and is sent to Neuhof, near Strasbourg. While there he took private flying lessons and the following year was offered a transfer from the French Army to the Air Force, where he received his wings after being posted to the 37th Fighter Regiment in Casablanca, Morocco.

Saint-Exupery’s first novella, "l’Aviateur" (the aviator), was published in a short-lived literary magazine le Navire d'argent (The Silver Ship).

In 1929, his first book, Courrier sud (Southern Mail) would be published; his career as an aviator and journalist is about to burgeon, and that same year he flew Casablanca–Dakar route. The 1931 publication of Vol de nuit (Night Flight) established him as a rising star in the literary world. It was the first of his major works to gain widespread acclaim and
became the winner of the prix Femina. The novel mirrored his experiences as a mail pilot and director of the Aeroposta.

On December 30, 1935 at 02:45 a.m., after 19 hours and 44 minutes in the air, Saint-Exupéry, along with his mechanic-navigator André Prévot, crashed in the Sahara desert. They were attempting to break the speed record in a Paris-to-Saigon air race (called a raid) and win a prize of 150,000 francs.

Saint-Exupéry continued to write until the spring of 1943, when he left the United States with American troops bound for North Africa in World War II. During the war, he initially flew a Bloch MB.170 with the GR II/33 reconnaissance squadron of the Armée de l'Air. After France's 1940 armistice with Germany, he voyaged to North America, escaping through Portugal and arriving in New York on the last day of 1940 with the intention of convincing the U.S. to quickly enter the conflict against Nazi Germany.

On one flight he circled the airport for an hour after returning, so that he could finish reading a novel, to the chagrin of his colleagues awaiting his arrival. Saint Exupery frequently flew with a lined notebook (carnet) during his long solitary flights, and some of his philosophical writings were created during such periods when he could reflect on the world below him.
THE SUMMARIES

The book starts with the narrator, who is an airplane pilot, recollecting his favorite picture when he was a six-year-old boy. The picture was of a boa constrictor eating a large animal. He recalls how a boa constrictor cannot move after swallowing its prey, and must hibernate for the six months until its food has been digested. Fascinated by this story, he had drawn his first drawing, Drawing Number One, which showed a boa constrictor devouring an elephant. When he showed his picture to the elders he was surprised to see that they couldn't make out what it was and were not frightened of it either as he had hoped they would be. They couldn't understand why anyone would be frightened of a hat, which is what they interpreted the drawing to be. But his picture was not a hat but rather, a boa constrictor digesting an elephant.

He then drew the inside of the boa constrictor in another picture, Drawing Number Two, where the elephant could be seen clearly. But the grown-ups advised the narrator to give up drawing and pursue geography, arithmetic and grammar. Disheartened by his failure to become a painter, he realizes how difficult it is for children to always be explaining something to grown-ups. So the narrator learned to be a pilot, noting that the geography he learned did prove to be useful but that his opinion of adults did not improve: whenever one would see Drawing Number One, they would think it was a hat. Consequently, he could no longer talk about boa constrictors or stars with anybody.

This continued until six years earlier when his plane had crashed in the Sahara desert. He was thousand miles from home and faced with a life or death situation. The narrator was shocked to hear an odd little voice asking him to draw a sheep. He turns to see the little prince, who is examining the narrator, looking nothing like a child lost in the middle of the desert. The narrator doesn't know how to draw a sheep so he shows Drawing
Number One to the little prince instead. The little prince examines the drawing and says that he doesn't want a picture of an elephant inside a boa constrictor. Finally, after a couple of attempts he is able to draw a box with a sheep inside it, and the little prince is very happy.

The narrator and the little prince become friends and he tries to find out where the little prince comes from, but the little prince is more concerned with the pilot's plane, laughing at its broken parts. The little prince is comforted by the fact that the narrator also comes from the sky, asking him what planet he comes from. The pilot is surprised at this question and in turn tries to find out what planet the little prince comes from. The little prince ignores the question and admires the pilot's drawing of the sheep in a box. The pilot offers to draw a string to tie to the sheep so he won't get lost, but the little prince laughs. The sheep will not get lost, he says, because on the planet where he lives everything is very small.

The narrator is surprised to discover that the planet the little prince comes from is very small and only the size of a house. In fact, it is an asteroid called B-612, which is only visible through a telescope. The narrator claims that a Turkish astronomer had sighted the little prince's asteroid in 1909, but that no one would seriously believe anybody wearing traditional Turkish clothes. After a Turkish dictator ordered all his subjects to change to European clothing, the astronomer successfully presented his report again in 1920.

The narrator insists that these details are not a concession to his grown-up readers. He says that grown-ups can only understand facts and figures, without ever wondering about other essential qualities, such as beauty and love. Instead, they only care about how old someone is or how much a house costs in order to decide what is beautiful. For example,
he notes that a child would accept the little prince's existence based solely on the fact that he wanted a sheep, while an adult would care only that the little prince came from Asteroid B-612.