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Little prince chapter 1 3 summary

But [a grown-up] 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. See Important Quotations Explained The novel's narrator says that when he was six years old, before he became a pilot, he saw in a book a picture of a boa constrictor devouring a wild animal. In the same book, the narrator read that boa constrictors must hibernate for six months after swallowing their prey in order to digest it. Fascinated by this information, the narrator drew his first drawing, which he calls Drawing Number One. The drawing, a picture of a boa constrictor digesting an elephant, looked like a lumpy blob with two flat lines tapering off to the left and right. But grown-ups were not frightened by the picture, because they thought it was supposed to be a hat. To explain his drawing to adults, the narrator drew Drawing Number Two, an x-ray view of Drawing Number One that showed the elephant inside the snake. Disturbed by this image, grown-ups advised the narrator to give up drawing and pursue geography, arithmetic, and grammar instead. Realizing that grown-ups would always require things to be explained to them, the narrator decided not to be an artist and became a pilot instead. He admits that the geography he learned did prove to be useful for flying. The narrator's opinion of adults never improved. Every time he met a grown-up, he would test him by showing him Drawing Number One. The grown-ups would always think it was a picture of a hat. Consequently, the narrator knew he could talk with the grown-ups only about boring, pragmatic topics like politics and neckties. Summary: Chapter II The narrator feels lonely his whole life until one day, six years before he tells his story, he crashes his plane in the middle of the Sahara desert. As the situation is beginning to look dire, the pilot is shocked to hear an odd little voice asking him to draw a sheep. He turns to see the little prince. The prince looks like a small, blond child, but he stares intently at the pilot without the fear that a child lost in the desert would have. The pilot does not know how to draw a sheep, so instead he sketches Drawing Number One, and he is astounded when the little prince recognizes it as a picture of an elephant inside a boa constrictor. The little prince rejects Drawing Number One, insisting that he needs a drawing of a sheep. After drawing three different sheep that the prince rejects, the pilot finally draws a box and gives it to the little prince. He says that the box contains exactly the type of sheep for which he is looking. This drawing makes the little prince very happy. The prince wonders if the sheep will have enough grass to eat, explaining that the place where he lives is quite small. Summary: Chapter III The pilot tries to find out where his mysterious new friend comes from, but the little prince prefers asking questions to answering them. He questions the pilot about his plane and what it does, and the pilot tells the little prince that it allows him to fly through the air. The little prince takes comfort in the fact that the pilot also came from the sky, asking him what planet he comes from. The pilot is surprised by this question and tries to find out what planet the little prince comes from. But the little prince ignores the pilot's queries and admires the sheep the pilot has drawn for him. The pilot offers to draw a post and a string to tie the sheep to so that it won't get lost, but the little prince laughs. The sheep will not get lost, he says, because he comes from a very small planet. Analysis: Chapters I-III By beginning his story with a discussion of his childhood drawings, the narrator introduces the idea that perception of an item varies from person to person. The narrator intends for people to see his drawing as a boa constrictor eating an elephant, but most adults can't see the hidden elephant and think the drawing represents a hat. Throughout *The Little Prince*, the narrator's drawings allow Saint-Exupéry to discuss concepts that he would not be able to express adequately in words. Drawings, the novel suggests, are a way of imparting knowledge that is more creative and open to interpretation, and thus more in line with the abstract perspectives of children. Because it must be interpreted, Drawing Number One is an example of a symbol. It is a picture of a hat that actually signifies a boa constrictor that has swallowed an elephant, but the viewer must have the imagination to spot that non-literal meaning. The narrator recalls that when he was a child, he saw a picture in a book called *True Stories*. In it a boa constrictor was swallowing a beast and there was a description of this process. The narrator made his first drawing with colored pencils of a snake with a large bulge in it, but was bothered that adults asked if it was a hat. He drew another picture that showed the elephant inside the snake but adults told him to put drawings away and focus on math and history. Clearly grownups did not understand him, and it was tiring to always explain to them. When he was older, he chose to be a pilot and ended up flying almost everywhere in the world. He met a lot of serious people and whenever he met someone who seemed enlightened he would show them his first drawing. When they said it was a hat, he would no longer be inclined to talk about jungles, stars, and snakes and would instead talk about bridge and golf. Chapter II The narrator recounts how he lived alone and had no one he could really talk to until he crash-landed in the Sahara Desert. This was a matter of life and death since he only had enough food and water for eight days. The first night, he sleeps on the sand, completely isolated from anyone else in the world. A voice wakes him, asking him to draw him a sheep. The narrator jumps up in surprise, and sees a serious little boy in front of him. The boy does not seem to be suffering from malnutrition or anything else, and the narrator asks him what he is doing here. The boy simply repeats his request for a sheep. Though this is absurd, the narrator finds he cannot disobey. He tells the boy he mostly studied other things in life besides drawing, but the boy does not care. Since the narrator does not know how to draw a sheep he repeats the only thing he does know how to draw - an elephant in a boa constrictor. To his shock the boy says he does not want a picture of an elephant in a boa constrictor. Those creatures are dangerous and everything is small where he lives; he needs a sheep. The narrator draws one and the boy rejects it as sick. He rejects the second one as too old. Finally the narrator draws a crate and tells him the sheep is inside. The boy smiles and is very pleased. He looks carefully at the drawing and says happily that the sheep is going to sleep. This is how the narrator met the little prince. Chapter III It takes the narrator a while to figure out where the prince came from. The prince asks so many questions and never seems to hear the ones the narrator asks. For example, he stares at the plane and asks about it. When the narrator tells him he fell out of the sky, the prince is astonished and laughs that he fell out too. The narrator is a bit perturbed, but a moment later when the prince asks him what names he came from, he begins to wonder where exactly the prince is from. The child does not answer and contemplates his drawing. The narrator is intrigued and tries to get more out of the boy, but he remains focused on his drawing. The narrator says he can draw a rope to tie up the sheep but the boy wonders where he could go. After all, everything is so small where he comes from, and "straight ahead, you can't go very far" (8). Chapter IV The narrator now knows the prince's planet is barely bigger than a house! He always knew, of course, that some planets were very, very small, but this is still fascinating. He believes that this is Asteroid B-612, sighted by a Turkish astronomer in 1909 (when the astronomer first announced the discovery no one believed him because of his strange clothes, but the emperor forced him to wear respectable clothes and then everyone took him seriously). The narrator admits he provides these details because grown-ups like numbers. They always want to know, for example, what a new person weighs or how old they are or how much money they make. They don't want to know what really matters, like if he collects butterflies. When discussing the prince, the narrator says, you can't simply say he was delightful and wanted a sheep; rather, you have to say he was from Asteroid B-612. That way grownups will feel like they understand. The narrator doesn't care about numbers in regards to the prince, of course, and would rather talk about this as a fairy tale... "Once upon a time there was a little prince who lived on a planet hardly any bigger than he was, and who needed a friend" (12). This story should be taken seriously, of course, because the narrator comes to love his serious little friend. He does not want to forget him, so he tries to draw him. Even these drawings always seem a bit off and he knows he will probably get some details wrong. Chapter V Each day, the narrator learns something new about the prince. One day, the prince asks him if sheep eat bushes, and when the narrator affirms this, he asks gravely about baobabs. The narrator replies that baobabs are very tall trees, not bushes, but the prince states that they are small at one time. The narrator must acknowledge this but asks the prince if he wants his sheep to eat them. The prince replies that the narrator must know the answer to this. The narrator explains that there are good and bad plants on the prince's planet but the seeds are invisible. When the plant sprouts and it is a bad plant, you have to pull it up right away. Baobab seeds, which are bad, are everywhere on his planet and they cannot be allowed to grow or they will take over. Thus, the little prince explains that he has to be very disciplined and tend to the plants. It is tedious but easy work. One day, the prince asks the narrator to draw this out for the children where he lives, and the narrator complies. Though reluctant to be a moralizer, he depicts a small planet overgrown by a massive tree, which is something the prince told him had happened. The narrator admits he does not quite know why this drawing is also the largest in his collection, but that he felt a sense of urgency for some reason. Chapter VI The narrator says that he got to know the prince and his sad life, and how for a time his only pleasure was that of sunsets. At first he does not seem to know that he has to wait for the sunset here because on his tiny planet if you moved your chair simply a few feet you'd get to see twilight whenever you wanted. He smiles that one time he saw the sun set forty-four times. When the narrator asks him gently if he was sad that day (as watching the sunsets are helpful when one is sad), the prince does not answer. Chapter VII One day the prince muses on sheep eating flowers even when there are thorns. He asks the narrator gravely what use thorns are. The narrator is busy trying to work on his plane because it is still unable to fly; also, he is running out of drinking water. The prince keeps asking the question and the narrator, annoyed, replies that thorns are no good and they are just flowers' way of being mean. The prince is surprised and then angrily bursts out that flowers are weak and naïve and need thorns. The narrator is still irritated at his plane and tells the prince sternly he is trying to do something serious. In response, the prince, hurt, tells the narrator he is talking like a grown-up. He goes on to say he confuses everything and that he knows a planet with a gentleman with a red face who has never smelled a flower or looked at a star or loved anyone and all he does is add up numbers and tell himself he is a serious man. In fact, the prince states, he is a mushroom. The narrator is confused. The prince, now fully irate, asks why this is not serious or why sheep eating flowers is not serious. He says that he knows of a unique flower that exists nowhere else but on his planet and to consider what would happen if a sheep came up and ate it. Shouldn't this be serious, he asks? There is only that one special flower up there and if it is eaten then it would be like if all the stars went out. By this time, the prince is sobbing and the narrator is incredibly ashamed at his own behavior. He forgets what he is working on and comforts the prince. He tells the boy his flower is not in danger and apologizes for being so clumsy. He does not know what to say. Chapter VIII The narrator learns more about the flower from the prince. It seems that on the prince's planet simple flowers would sprout up all the time. However, one day, an interesting and different seed grows and prepares itself, and the prince waits to see what she will look like when she opens. When the flower finally spreads her petals, she archly apologizes for being untidy. The prince is full of admiration and tells her she is lovely. She believes it is breakfast time and asks him to attend to her. He finds a watering can and does so. Over time, though, the flower's vanity becomes more apparent. For example, she asks for a screen because she has a horror of drafts. Bemused, the prince finds her complicated. She then asks for a glass canister to cover her because where she came from - there she halts, ashamed that she was almost caught in a lie. The prince eventually mistrusted her. He tells the narrator this, and that one must only smell flowers and look at them, not listen to them. He should have enjoyed how she perfumed his planet. He did not understand her back then, and says "I should have judged her according to her actions, not her words. She perfumed my planet and lit up my life! I never should have run away!" (24). Chapter IX The prince continues with his tale and his preparations to run away. He rakes the area around his two small active volcanoes and the extinct one, which is probably for the best. He uproots the last baobab shoots. He waters the flower and puts her under glass and says goodbye. She coughs but does not respond. After a moment, she apologizes for being silly but he could not understand her new sweetness. She tells him she loved him and that they were both silly, and to put the canister away. He asks about drafts but she says she is a flower and needs the air. Finally, she tells him to go; she knows he wants to leave and it would be irritating if he stayed around. In actuality, she does not want him to see her cry; after all, she is still quite proud. Analysis What initially seems like a story for children quickly establishes itself as something quite different. Indeed, while the prose is simple and the events fantastical and the drawings as expansive as the text, the themes and symbols and metaphor and tone are far deeper and more melancholy. Scholar James E. Higgins characterizes the book as "unique" and one that "poses problems for the reader, no matter who he may be, and it never fails to respect the intelligence of the reader, no matter how young he may be." It is a book that focuses on the emotions, not the intellect, and one in which the author intimates that "even in this age of science, the poet sees far more than the analyst." The Little Prince is primarily a philosophical tale. And, therefore, beyond an easy and simple plot and irony, deep meaning is hidden. The author touches on abstract forms through parables, metaphors, and symbols of cosmic scale: good and evil, life and death, the human being, the true love of beauty, friendship, infinite loneliness, the relationship of the individual and the crowd, and many others. Despite the fact that the little prince is still a child, he sees the true vision of the world, inaccessible even to an adult. And people with deadened souls, whom the main character meets on his way, are much worse than the fabulous monsters. Relations between the prince and the rose are more complex than the relationship of princes and princesses in folk tales. Strong, romantic traditions are present in here. Firstly, it is the choice of the genre - fairy tale. The Little Prince is a fairy tale defined by its fabulous features: a fantastic journey of the hero, fairy-tale characters (fox, snake, rose). Romantics turn to the genre of folklore not accidentally. Folklore is about the childhood of humanity, and the childhood theme in Romanticism is one of the key themes. The prince is not a happy-go-lucky child; rather, he is solemn and mature even as he dreams and laughs and expresses disdain for adults and their pedantic proclivities. As a child, he is filled with a sense of wonder and curiosity about things that may appear simple or inconsequential to adults. It is ultimately the adults who reveal themselves to be lacking in depth or nuanced understanding of what the world around them means, who they are, and what they want. Even though the adults the prince meets tout their accomplishments and responsibilities, such things are marred by hypocrisy, pride, and ignorance. The prince has accomplished relatively little according to the standards set forth by such adults, but the things he does are truly meaningful. For example, he demonstrates a keen appreciation for the natural world and for caring for the things that are in his care. He is deeply interested in his surroundings and does not take them for granted. From the first moment the narrator meets the prince, the boy appears idiosyncratic and memorable. He is prone to questions and ignoring those lobbed at him, he is imaginative and cerebral, he loves sunsets, his planet had three volcanoes and a flower that he tended to assiduously, and he is unapologetically unhappy. This unhappiness derives from multiple sources: 1) the flower caused him unhappiness because he could not understand her and grew weary of her capricious, callous behavior; 2) the flower made him unhappy when he finally decided to leave because she was actually kind and seemed sad; and 3) being here on Earth makes him sad for a variety of reasons, including being away from the flower and feeling like he is not understood. The way that the prince manifests his unhappiness - besides his outbursts or querulous behavior - is his professed love for sunsets. A sunset typically symbolizes the end of something, a darkening and a shadow; thus, the prince wants to experience this over and over again so he can settle further in his grief. Higgins calls the prince an example of realism and states "he is not cute. He is the figure of the child we once were, but will never be again. His character is not marred by sentimentality, however. He is a tragic lover, aware of the great consequences of love once found, and he faces them squarely." The narrator is an acceptable adult because he still possesses a small amount of the childlike vision he had hoped to cultivate more before the adults in his life encouraged him to be more serious. He and the prince have parallel existences in their time together. They are both exiles, plucked from society (or in the prince's case, willingly separated), and both on the cusp of the death (the narrator through deprivation of water and food, the prince through emotional duress). With the prince's help the narrator is able to further distance himself from the dulling effects of adult society and see things more clearly. As the fox will say later in the book, the most important things are invisible; things that one sees with the eyes are not as important. This maxim is alluded to even in these early chapters before the prince details his meeting with the fox, for the narrator explains how the Turkish astronomer found the asteroid but was not believed by his peers because of his attire. Clearly their eyes blinded them to this magnificent scientific discovery.

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