



Chapter 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.

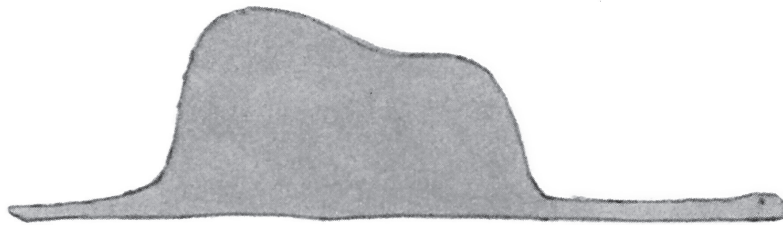


In the book it said: 'Boa constrictors swallow their prey whole, without chewing. Afterward they are no longer able to move, and they sleep during the six months of their digestion.'





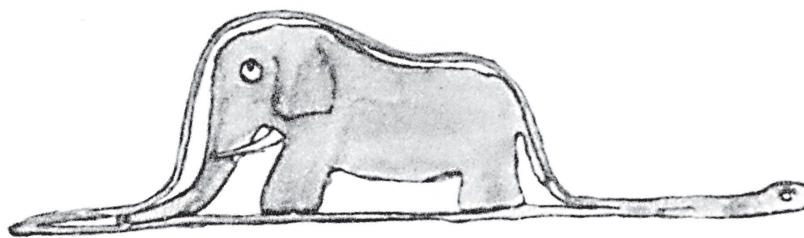
In those days I thought a lot about jungle adventures, and eventually managed to make my first drawing, using a coloured pencil. My drawing Number One looked like this:



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.



Chapter 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?'

'Draw me a sheep...'



I leaped up as if I had been struck by lightning. I rubbed my eyes hard. I stared. And I saw an extraordinary little fellow staring back at me very seriously. Here is the best portrait I managed to make of him, later on. But of course my drawing is much less attractive than my model. This is not my fault. My career as a painter was discouraged at the age of six by the grown-ups, and I had never learned to draw anything except boa constrictors, outside and inside.



So I stared wide-eyed at this apparition. Don't forget that I was a thousand miles from any inhabited territory. Yet this





little fellow seemed to be neither lost nor dying of exhaustion, hunger, or thirst; nor did he seem scared to death. There was nothing in his appearance that suggested a child lost in the middle of the desert a thousand miles from any inhabited territory. When I finally managed to speak, I asked him, ‘But... what are you doing here?’

And then he repeated, very slowly and very seriously, ‘Please...draw me a sheep...’

In the face of an overpowering mystery, you don’t dare disobey. Absurd as it seemed, a thousand miles from all inhabited regions and in danger of death, I took a scrap of paper and a pen out of my pocket. But then I remembered that I had mostly studied geography, history, arithmetic, and grammar, and I told the little fellow (rather crossly) that I didn’t know how to draw.

He replied, ‘That doesn’t matter. Draw me a sheep.’

Since I had never drawn a sheep, I made him one of the only two drawings I knew how to make—the one of the boa constrictor from outside. And I was astounded to hear the little fellow answer:

‘No! No! I don’t want an elephant inside a boa constrictor. A boa constrictor is very dangerous, and an elephant would get in the way. Where I live, everything is very small. I need a sheep. Draw me a sheep.’





So then I made a drawing.

He looked at it carefully, and then said, 'No. This one is already quite sick. Make another.'



I made another drawing. My friend gave me a kind, indulgent smile:

'You can see for yourself...that's not a sheep, it's a ram. It has horns...'



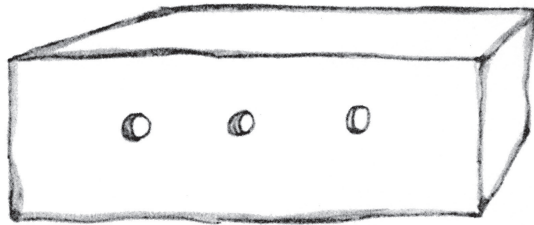
So I made my third drawing, but it was rejected, like the others:

'This one's too old. I want a sheep that will live a long time.'





So then, impatiently, since I was in a hurry to start work on my engine, I scribbled this drawing, and added, ‘This is just the crate. The sheep you want is inside.’



But I was amazed to see my young critic’s face light up. ‘That’s just the kind I wanted! Do you think this sheep will need a lot of grass?’

‘Why?’

‘Because where I live, everything is very small...’

‘There’s sure to be enough. I’ve given you a very small sheep.’

He bent over the drawing. ‘Not so small as all that... Look! He’s gone to sleep...’

And that’s how I made the acquaintance of the little prince.





第一章

我六歲那年，在一本描寫原始森林的名叫《真實的故事》的書上，看見過一幅精彩的插圖，畫的是一條蟒蛇在吞吃一頭猛獸。我現在把牠照樣畫在上面。

書中寫道：“蟒蛇把獵物囫圇吞下，嚼都不嚼。然後牠就無法動彈，躺上六個月來消化牠們。”

當時，我對叢林裏的奇妙景象想得很多，於是我也用彩色鉛筆畫了我的第一幅畫：我的作品 1 號。它就像這樣：

我把這幅傑作給大人看，問他們我的圖畫嚇不嚇人。

他們回答說：“一頂帽子怎麼會嚇人呢？”

我畫的不是一頂帽子。我畫的是一條蟒蛇在消化大象。於是我把蟒蛇肚子的內部畫出來，好讓這些大人看得明白。他們老是要人給他們解釋。我的作品 2 號是這樣的：

那些大人勸我別再畫蟒蛇，別管牠是剖開的，還是沒剖開的，全都丟開。他們說，我還是把心思放在地理、歷史、



算術和語法上好。就這樣，我才六歲，就放棄了輝煌的畫家生涯。作品 1 號和作品 2 號都沒成功，我泄了氣。那些大人自己甚麼也弄不懂，老要孩子們一遍一遍給他們解釋，真煩人。

我只好另外選擇一個職業，學會了開飛機。世界各地我差不多都飛過。的確，地理學對我非常有用。我一眼就能認出哪是中國，哪是亞利桑那。要是夜裏迷了路，這很有用。

就這樣，我這一生中，跟好多嚴肅的人打過很多交道。我在那些大人中間生活過很長時間。我仔細地觀察過他們。觀察下來印象並沒好多少。

要是碰上一個人，看上去頭腦稍為清楚些，我就拿出一直保存着的作品 1 號，讓他試試看。我想知道，他是不是真的能看懂。可是人家總是回答我：“這是一頂帽子。”這時候，我就不跟他說甚麼蟒蛇啊，原始森林啊，星星啊，都不說了。我就說些他懂的事情。我跟他說橋、高爾夫、政治，還有領帶。於是大人覺得很高興，認識了這麼個通情達理的人。



第二章

我孤獨地生活着，沒有一個真正談得來的人，直到六年前，有一次飛機出了故障，降落在撒哈拉大沙漠。發動機裏有樣甚麼東西碎掉了。因為我身邊既沒有機械師，也沒有乘客，我就打算單人匹馬來完成一項困難的修復工作。這在我是個生死攸關的問題。我帶的水只夠喝一星期了。

第一天晚上，我睡在這片遠離人煙的大沙漠上，比靠一塊船板在大海中漂流的遇難者還孤獨。所以，當天矇矓亮，有個奇怪的聲音輕輕把我喚醒的時候，你們可以想像我有多麼驚訝。這個聲音說：

“對不起……請給我畫隻綿羊！”

“嗯！”

“請給我畫隻綿羊……”

我像遭了雷擊似的，猛地一下子跳了起來。我用力揉了揉眼睛，仔細地看了看。只見一個從沒見過的小人兒，正一



本正經地看着我呢。後來我給他畫了一幅非常出色的肖像，就是旁邊的這幅。不過我的畫，當然遠遠不及本人可愛。這不是我的錯。我的畫家生涯在六歲那年就讓大人給斷送了，除了畫剖開和不剖開的蟒蛇，後來再沒畫過甚麼。

我吃驚地瞪大眼睛看着他。你們別忘記，這裏離有人住的地方很遠很遠呢。可是這個小人兒，看上去並不像迷了路，也不像累得要命、餓得要命、渴得要命或怕得要命。他一點不像在遠離人類居住地的沙漠裏迷路的孩子。等我總算說得出話時，我對他說：

“可是……你在這裏做甚麼呢？”

他輕聲輕氣地又說了一遍，好像那是件很要緊的事情：

“對不起……請給我畫一隻綿羊……”

受到神秘事物強烈衝擊時，一個人是不敢不聽從的。儘管在我看來，離一切有人居住的地方遠而又遠，又處於死亡的威脅之下，在這裏想到畫畫真是匪夷所思，可是我還是從口袋裏掏出一張紙、一支鋼筆。但我想起我只學了地理、歷史、算術和語法，所以我就（有點沒好氣地）對那小人兒說，我不會畫畫。他回答說：

“沒關係。請給我畫一隻綿羊。”

我因為從沒畫過綿羊，就在我只會畫的兩張圖畫裏挑一張給他畫了：沒剖開的蟒蛇圖。但我聽到小人兒下面說的話，簡直驚呆了：





“不對！不對！我不要在蟒蛇肚子裏的大象。蟒蛇很危險，大象呢，太佔地方。在我那裏，甚麼都是小小的。我要的是一隻綿羊。請給我畫一隻綿羊。”

我只得畫了起來。他專心地看了一會，然後說：

“不對！這隻羊已經病得不輕了。另外畫一隻吧。”

我畫了右面的這隻。

我的朋友溫和地笑了，口氣寬容地說：

“你看看……這隻不是綿羊，是山羊。頭上長着角……”

於是我又畫了一張。

但這一張也跟前幾張一樣，沒能通過：

“這隻太老了。我要一隻可以活得很久的綿羊。”

我已經沒有耐心了，因為我急於要去把發動機拆下來，所以就胡亂畫了一張。

我隨口說道：

“這個呢，是個箱子。你要的綿羊就在裏面。”

但是令我吃驚的是，這個小評判的臉上頓時變得容光煥發了：

“我要的就是這個！你說，這隻綿羊會要很多草嗎？”

“問這做甚麼？”

“因為我那裏樣樣都很小……”

“肯定夠了。我給你的是隻很小的綿羊。”

他低下頭去看那幅畫：



“不算太小……看！牠睡着了……”

就這樣，我認識了小王子。