The Little Prince (Le Petit Prince) by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

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Background:

In The Little Prince, its narrator, the pilot, talks of being stranded in the desert beside his crashed aircraft. The account clearly drew on Saint-Exupéry's own experience in the Sahara. In 1935 Saint-Exupéry, along with his copilot-navigator André Prévot, crashed in the Sahara desert. Lost among the sand dunes, they both began to see mirages, which were quickly followed by more vivid hallucinations. Finally, on the fourth day, a Bedouin on a camel discovered them and administered a native rehydration treatment, which saved Saint-Exupéry's and Prévot's lives.

The prince's home, "Asteroid B-612", was likely derived as a progression of one of the planes Saint-Exupéry flew as an airmail pilot, which bore the serial number "A-612".

SYMBOLS AND RELATIONSHIPS:

THE FOX:

"What is the use of building ties with another? "Because we can," seems on the surface to be a curt response; yet at a deeper level it is a reasonable answer. Relationships are the sun, the rain, and the soil in the lives of child. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1943) created a powerful metaphorical story when he wrote about the experiences of a little prince who finds himself temporarily stranded on earth. During one of his adventures, the little prince encounters a lone fox. What the little prince learned from his experience with the fox can be used as a powerful metaphor for counselors about the kinds of relationships they must establish with their clients, especially their child clients. The therapeutic relationship as seen through the eyes of the fox and the little prince begins when the little prince, lonely and desperate for companionship, encounters a fox. During his service as a mail pilot in the Sahara, Saint-Exupéry had viewed a fennec (desert sand fox), which most likely inspired him to create the fox character in the book. In a letter written to his sister Didi from the Western Sahara's Cape Juby, where he was the manager of an airmail stopover station in 1928, he tells of raising a fennec that he adored. In the novella, the fox, believed to be modeled after the author's intimate New York City friend, Silvia Hamilton Reinhardt, tells the prince that his rose is unique and special, as she is the one he loves.[27] The novella's iconic phrase, "One sees clearly only with the heart" is believed to have been suggested by Reinhardt. At first the little prince proposes that the fox come right now and play with him, ignoring the process of first building a relationship. It seems like such a simple request, "Just play with me. I have confidence that we will do fine." In some ways it almost sounds foolhardy. But the little prince is so unhappy and so lonely, that he is looking for someone - any one - to fill the void he feels within.

THE BAOBABS:

The fearsome, grasping baobab trees, researchers have contended, were meant to represent Nazism attempting to destroy the planet. These Baobab are the fear in child psyche, if not uprooted in time will
probing of the indifferent adults wonders him and he realises his world of innocence is actual place he

THE ROSE:

Many researchers believe that the prince's kindhearted but petulant and vain rose was inspired by Saint-Exupéry's Salvadoran wife Consuelo de Saint Exupéry,[27][29] with the small home planet being inspired by her small native country, El Salvador, also known as "The Land of Volcanoes."[30] Despite a tumultuous marriage, Saint-Exupéry kept Consuelo close to his heart and portrayed her as the prince's rose, whom he tenderly protects with a wind screen and places under a glass dome on his tiny planet. Saint-Exupéry's infidelity and the doubts of his marriage are symbolized by the vast field of roses the prince encounters during his visit to Earth.

THE PRINCE - HIS BROTHER?

Saint-Exupéry may have drawn inspiration for the prince's character and appearance from his own self as a youth, as during his early years friends and family called him le Roi-Soleil ("the Sun King") because of his golden curly hair. Some have seen the prince as a Christ figure, as the child is sin-free and "believes in a life after death", subsequently returning to his personal heaven. One of Saint-Exupéry's earliest literary references to a small prince is In his writings as a special correspondent for Paris-Soir, the author described traveling from France to the USSR by train. where he came upon large groups of Polish families huddled together, returning to their homeland.

The little prince's reassurance to the pilot that the prince's body is only an empty shell resembles the last words of Antoine's dying younger brother François, who told the author, from his deathbed: "Don't worry. I'm all right. I can't help it. It's my body". This is however deeply philosophical.

Bevin House, a 22-room mansion in Asharoken that overlooked Long Island Sound, where he wrote this novella is behind the small planet of the lamplighter where a day lasts only a minute and one can see several sun sets in a single day. He usually wrote at a large dining table, moving his arm chair from one room to the other. His meditative view of sunsets at the Bevin House were incorporated in the book, where the prince visits a small planet with 43 daily sunsets, a planet where all that is needed to watch a sunset "is move your chair a few steps."

Children and adults:

Children have a different sense of time than adults. The past, the present, and the future often merge in their lives, creating a sense of timelessness. Adults are so different. Job demands often constrict our lives. The fox shows us two important ways to use the quality time with children- silence and patience. The novelist's perception of the two worlds of the children and that of the adults is seen through his narrative style, the doodles or the animated sketches, the tour de Planet of the prince and his experiences gathered round these planets, how he sees the adult world and so on. The materialist probing of the indifferent adults wonders him and he realises his world of innocence is actual place he
belongs to. He, however, learns to become responsible, knows a new way of loving. His experiences with the adults provide him with a philosophical truth.