

The Little  
Prince

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# The Little Prince

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By

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Saint-Exupéry**

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## Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

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**A**ntoine de Saint-Exupéry, officially **Antoine Marie Jean-**

**Baptiste Roger, comte de Saint Exupéry** (29 June 1900 – 31 July 1944) was a French aristocrat, writer, poet, and pioneering aviator. He became a laureate of several of France's highest literary awards and also won the U.S. National Book Award. He is best remembered for his novella *The Little Prince* (*Le Petit Prince*) and for his lyrical aviation writings, including *Wind, Sand and Stars* and *Night Flight*.

Saint-Exupéry was a successful commercial pilot before World War II, working airmail routes in Europe, Africa and South America. At the outbreak of war, he joined the French Air Force (*Armée de l'Air*), flying reconnaissance missions until France's armistice with Germany in 1940. After being demobilised from the French Air For-

ce, he travelled to the United States to persuade its government to enter the war against Nazi Germany. Following a 27-month hiatus in North America, during which he wrote three of his most important works, he joined the Free French Air Force in North Africa, although he was far past the maximum age for such pilots and in declining health. He disappeared over the Mediterranean on his last assigned reconnaissance mission in July 1944, and is believed to have died at that time.

Prior to the war, Saint-Exupéry had achieved fame in France as an aviator. His literary works – among them *The Little Prince*, translated into over 250 languages and dialects – posthumously boosted his stature to national hero status in France. He earned further widespread recognition with international translations of his other works. His 1939 philosophical memoir *Terre des hommes* became the name of a major international humanitarian group, and was also used to create the central theme (*Terre des hommes—Man and His World*).

### ***Youth and aviation***

Saint-Exupéry was born in Lyon to an aristocratic family that could trace its lineage back several centuries. He was the third of five children of the Countess Marie de Fonscolombe and Count Jean de Saint Exupéry (1863–1904). His father, an executive of the *Le Soleil* (The Sun) insurance brokerage, died of a stroke in Lyon's *La Four* train station before his son's fourth birthday. His father's death would greatly affect the entire family, transforming their status to that of 'impoverished aristocrats'.

## Writing career



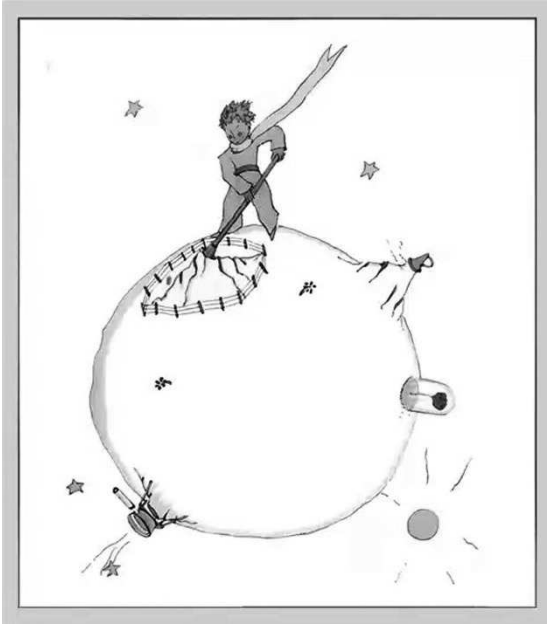
Saint-Exupéry's first novella, *L'Aviateur* (*The Aviator*), was published in a short-lived literary magazine *Le Navire d'Argent* (*The Silver Ship*). In 1929, his first book, *Courrier Sud* (*Southern Mail*) was published; his career as an aviator and journalist was about to begin. That same year, Saint-Exupéry flew the Casablanca—Dakar route.





The 1931 publication of *Vol de nuit* (*Night Flight*) established Saint-Exupéry as a rising star in the literary world. It was the first of his major works to gain widespread acclaim and won the prix Femina. The novel mirrored his experiences as a mail pilot and director of the Aeroposta Argentina airline, based in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

# *The Little Prince*



It was after Saint-Exupéry's arrival in the United States that the

author adopted the hyphen within his surname, as he was annoyed with Americans addressing him as "Mr. Exupéry". It was also during this period that he authored *Pilote de guerre* (*Flight to Arras*), which earned widespread acclaim, and *Lettre à un otage* (*Letter to a Hostage*), dedicated to the 40 million French living under Nazi oppression, plus numerous shorter pieces in support of France. The Saint-Exupérys also resided in Quebec City, Canada for several weeks during the late spring of 1942, during which time they met a precocious eight-year-old boy with blond curly hair, Thomas, the son of philosopher Charles De Koninck, with whom the Saint-Exupérys resided.

After he returned from his stay in Quebec, which had been fraught with illness and stress, the French wife of one of his publishers helped persuade Saint-Exupéry to produce a children's book, hoping to calm his nerves and also compete with the new series of *Mary Poppins* stories by P.L. Travers. Saint-Exupéry wrote and illustrated *The Little Prince* in New York City and the village of Asharoken in mid-to-late 1942, with the manuscript being completed in October. It would be first published months later in early 1943 in both English and French in the United States, and would only later appear in his native homeland posthumously after the liberation of France, as his works had been banned by the collaborationist Vichy Regime.

### *Literary Works of Author*

While not precisely autobiographical, much of Saint-Exupéry's work is inspired by his experiences as a pilot. One notable example is his novella, *The Little Prince*, a poetic tale self-illustrated in watercolours in which a pilot stranded in the desert meets a young prince fallen to Earth from a tiny asteroid. *The Little Prince* is a philosophical story, including societal criticism, remarking on the strangeness of the adult world. One biographer wrote of his most famous work: "Rarely have an author and a character been so intimately bound together as Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and his Little Prince," and remarking of their dual fates, "...the two remain tangled together, twin innocents who fell from the sky."

Saint-Exupéry's notable literary works (published English translations in brackets) are constituted by:

- *L'Aviateur* (1926) (*The Aviator*, in the anthology *A Sense of Life*)

- ***Courrier sud*** (1929) (*Southern Mail*) – made as a movie in French
- ***Vol de nuit*** (1931) (*Night Flight*) – winner of the full prix Femina, and made twice as a movie and a TV film, both in English
- ***Terre des hommes*** (1939) – winner of the Grand Prix du roman de l'Académie française
- ***Pilote de guerre*** (1942) (titled in English as: *Flight to Arras*) – winner of the Grand Prix Littéraire de l'Aéro-Club de France
- ***Le petit prince*** (1943) (*The Little Prince*), posthumous in France – translated into more than 250 languages and dialects, and among the top three selling books in the world; made as both movies and TV films in a number of languages, and adapted to numerous other media in many languages
- ***Lettre à un otage*** (1944) (*Letter to a Hostage*, posthumous in English)

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# \* The Little Prince \*

## Chapter 1

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**“We are introduced to the narrator, a pilot, and his ideas about grown-ups.”**



Once when I was six years old I saw a magnificent picture

in a book, called *True Stories from Nature*, about the primeval forest. It was a picture of a boa constrictor in the act of swallowing an animal. Here is a copy of the drawing.

In the book it said: "Boa constrictors swallow their prey whole, without chewing it. After that they are not able to move,