

January 8, 2025

Dear Mr. de Saint-Exupéry,

Growing up, I've always been annoyed by my little brother. He cries whenever he doesn't get his way, interrupts me whenever I'm trying to concentrate, and constantly insists on playing childish games with him. He lives in his little universe, with himself at the center. To make matters worse, my parents let him, giving him free rein to do as he pleases. At dinner, he runs off without excusing himself, leaving his plate behind and leaving me to clean up after him. When he plays video games with his friends, he shouts so loudly that I can hear every word through the wall between our rooms. Everything about him drives me insane.

But then I read *The Little Prince*, and my perspective began to shift. I realized my frustration wasn't just because of my brother's behavior, but also because I had been that way when I was younger.

Your story unearthed something I had buried deep within myself: the memory of what it was like to be a child. I used to be curious and carefree, unburdened by responsibility. Like the Little Prince, I used to endlessly ask questions, ignoring the annoyed look on my parents' faces and never letting them go unanswered: "Why is our mailbox red? Why is fire hot?" I would follow my parents around the house, tugging on their sleeves and begging them to take me somewhere. And when we got there, I'd want to return home after just ten minutes.

Looking back now, I find it hard not to cringe at how selfish and embarrassing I was. But your story changed my view. It showed me that the freedom of childhood, the freedom in my brother that I resented, isn't a flaw. It's essential. *The Little Prince* helped me realize that this phase of life isn't something to be ashamed of, but rather, it's a crucial step toward understanding the intricacies of life.

The Little Prince's journey of leaving his planet, exploring the universe, and learning from those he meets reminds me of my growth as a child. It reminds me of the time when I had that same freedom, and it was only by exploiting this freedom that I was able to grasp just how complicated the world around me was. By living freely as a child, asking questions, and making mistakes, I learned what was right and wrong, and what my likes and dislikes were. I was able to figure out the world at my own pace.

As the Little Prince came to realize the importance of his responsibilities at the end of the story, I also began to realize something. The Little Prince's devotion to his rose taught me that freedom can help a person realize their responsibilities. Even though the Little Prince left his rose and had the freedom to go wherever he wanted, he was still eventually drawn back to his responsibilities on his planet, just as the freedom of childhood must also end as a person realizes their responsibilities. My freedom and mistakes as a child were not meaningless. They are the foundation of who I am today.

One line from your book left a deep impression on me: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." What was once invisible to my eyes became clear after reading your story. I always dismissed my brother's behavior as childish and irritating, but his world is full of the same freedom I once had. His world is simple, but it is no less valuable than mine.

Your story taught me to see with my heart. My brother isn't the nuisance I once thought he was. He is a Little Prince, living in his small universe, asking questions, and exploring the world. I have no right to take that away from him.

Thank you for lifting the fog from my eyes. What is essential in life really tends to go unseen.

Sincerely,
Hunter Lebun-Luo