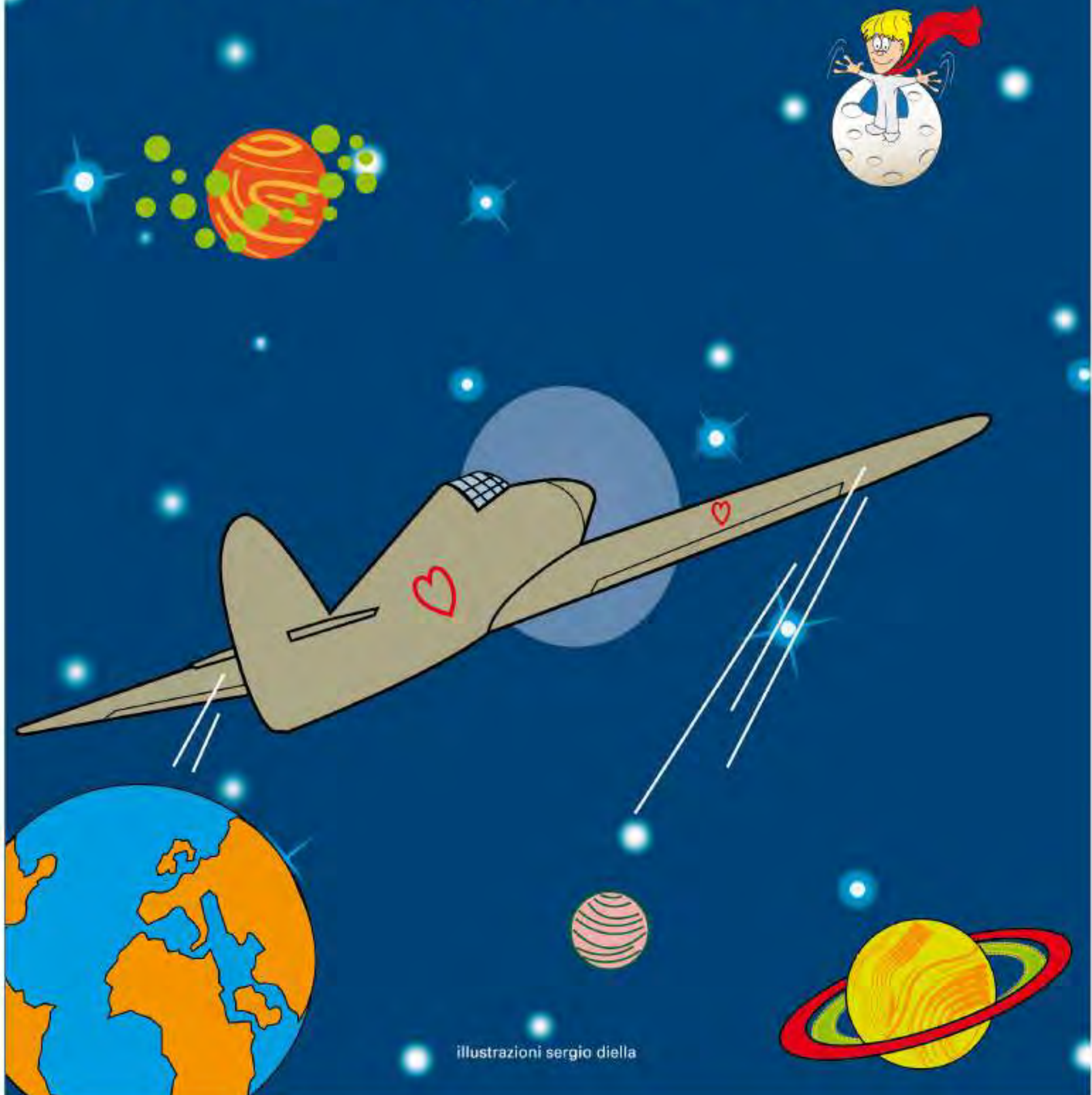


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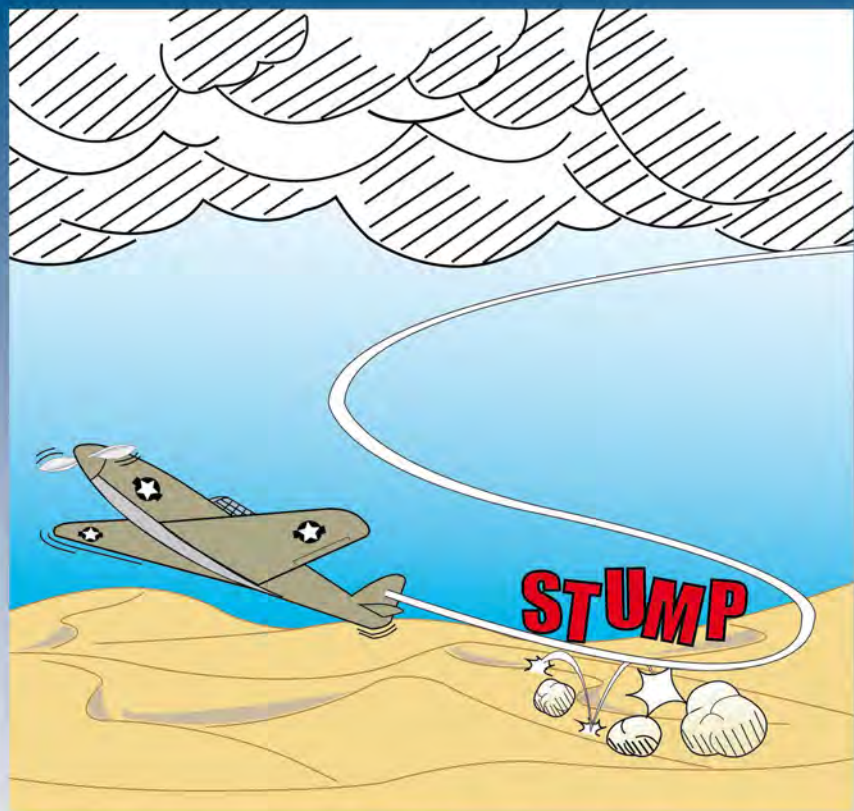
The Return of the Little Prince



illustrazioni sergio diella



That morning of the end of July 1944, the flight was quiet, monotonous, almost soothing, with a slight tailwind. Then, all of a sudden, a strong jolt!



The commands were locked. The plane had lost altitude, flying tail down, overturning several times in the air in a mix of clouds, mountains, land and sea. Finally, almost rebounding, it had touched the ground in a whirl of dust.



The pilot Antoine was stunned with a twirling of colour, flowers, stars ,rainbows in his head, just like a messy heavenly palette. He then fainted and, most likely, he recovered hours, maybe even days later.



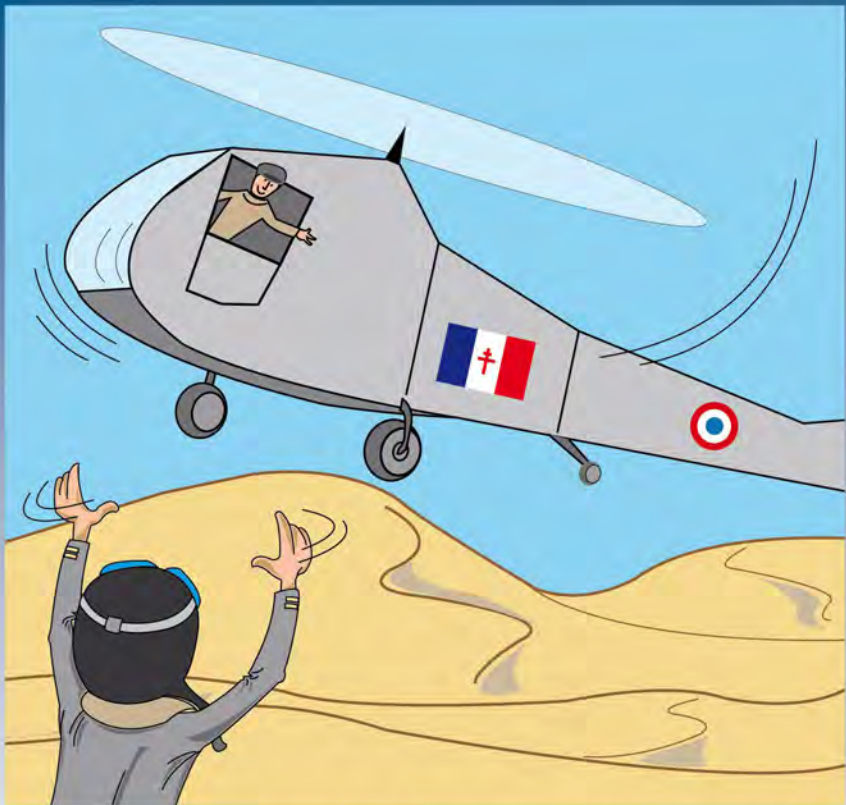
He was alive by a miracle. Where had he fallen? Looking from the nacelle, he could only see an expanse of reddish dunes and, in the distance, a dark, greenish spot, maybe woods. In the plane everything seemed in order, except for a flashing red light on the dashboard.



Feeling brave, he cautiously got out of the cockpit. He had to try to understand, to repair the breakdown so that he could leave again.



What was happening reminded him of a similar accident that had happened to him years ago when, as a young pilot of the French Aviation away on a war mission, he had crashed in the desert with his plane.



The memory of that episode had always remained uncertain, surreal, like a dream. He vaguely remembered that he had remained in the desert where he had crashed, in a similar and confused succession of sunrises and sunsets, for days, months or maybe more. Eventually, a plane noticed him so he was rescued by a helicopter, as he was told in the hospital where he then woke up.

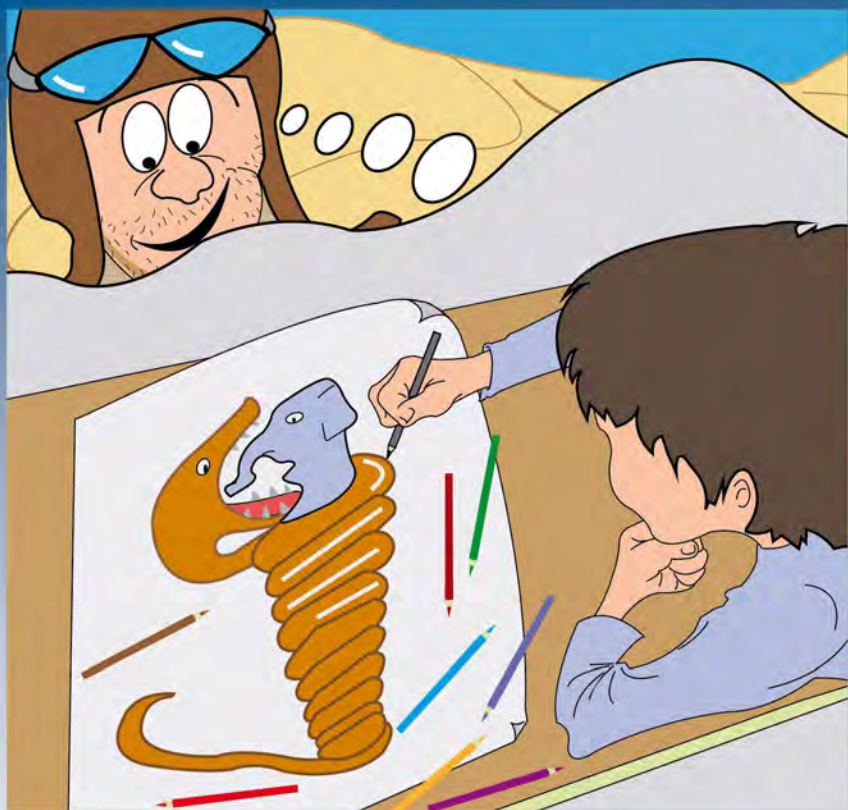


At the beginning, they believed that he was dead, but he recovered, even though they must have considered him a little bit out of his mind, judging by the doctors ask him strange questions, by the well-built nurses taking care of him and by the bars on the windows of the ward. What had happened to him? Had he experienced a delusion? Did the plants, which he fed himself with in order to survive in the desert, have hallucinatory effects?



During the time spent in the hospital he wrote down and illustrated the story of his memories, which he jealously kept for himself. In the desert, indeed, he had met "the Little Prince"!

Maybe he had only dreamt about him, maybe everything had happened in the subconscious! But those images, those feelings remained in his mind and to his heart, coming back once in a while in the form of a stabbing pain. He had mentioned it to family members and dearest friends, but, like the doctors, they looked at him as if he was a little bit crazy. The eccentric grizzled beard that he had grown during his hospitalization and his dreamy look confirmed that impression!



On the other hand, he had always been a little bit strange since he was a child: like when he drew the snake which ingested a whole elephant. The adults already didn't understand him! They thought that he had drawn a hat, although he explained to them writing that: "Boas swallow their prey without chewing it!".



He had found that same scholarly look on the doctors and on his family and friends, when he confided his meeting with the Little Prince. For this reason, he didn't tell that story anymore, keeping it to himself in a jealously hidden booklet.



Yet, he could clearly remember the little being, a long, blonde haired kid who had suddenly appeared to him in the desert, wearing a green jumpsuit, wrapped in a blue cloak with a fluttering red scarf, sparkling with stars. He could even still hear his weak voice, almost metallic, with harmonious twitches. Was it still delusion?



With those distant memories in his mind, after the swirling landing, Antoine got out of the cockpit, sinking into the reddish sand. He wanted to go immediately towards the dark and greenish spot that looked like a forest, very similar to the strange baobabs that he had drawn in the time spent with the Little Prince.



He decided to move forward. The red light kept on flashing stubbornly and it was better to try first to fix the plane. He extracted from his silver jumpsuit a bunch of sophisticated digital tools, but in the end they too could be used as screwdrivers and hammer to work with.



As he was working, he suddenly perceived a presence behind him and he heard a little voice asking: "But what are you still doing here? Have you come back for me?". It was the same as it was then, clear, maybe a little bit more adult!



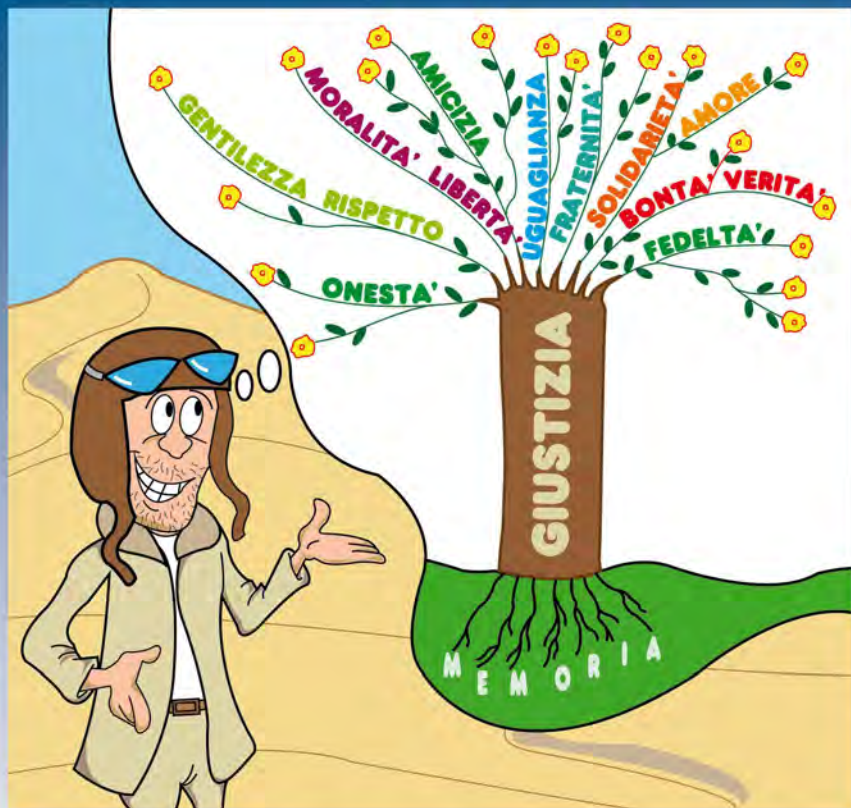
He turned sharply, as if stuck by a lightning. He rubbed his eyes because he couldn't believe it! The Little Prince was observing him happily and a little ironically. He had a few locks of silver hair through his blond now, and around his light eyes, very slight wrinkles mitigated his cheeky smile.



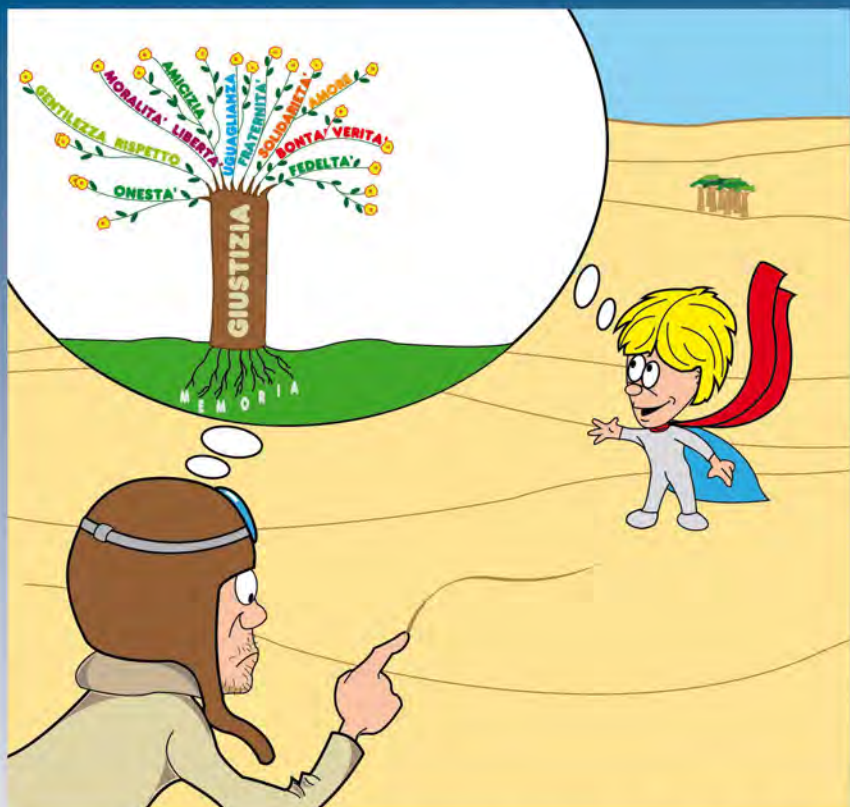
They looked at each other like old friends meeting again after a long time. Excited and moved, they run towards one another, Antoine heavy boots sinking in the sand, while the other almost slipping on it. They got close enough almost to embrace each other.



The time stopped for an instant. The radioactivity sensor ticked loudly. The Little Prince withdrew intimidated: the silver pilot jumpsuit seemed to magnetically attract his fluttering light blue cloak.



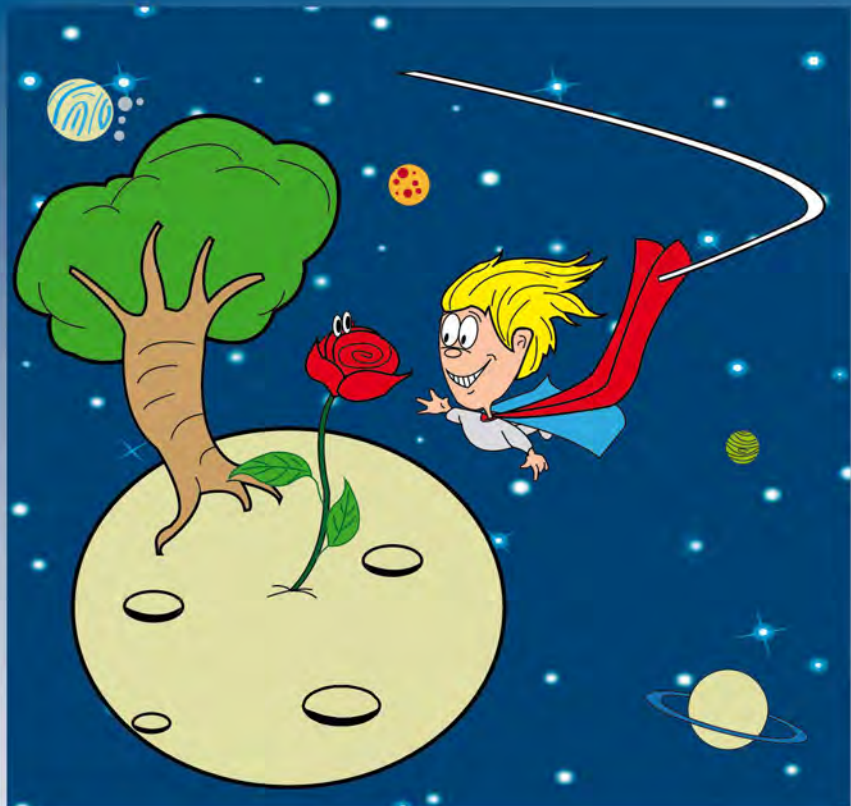
The Little Prince immediately asked, as if he was asking for the permission to hug: "Would you draw the tree of peace for me?". He hadn't lost the habit of asking questions, Antoine thought. He would have continued asking until he had the answers his heart desired! He then remembered when, in a small village in Italy, in front of an elementary school, he saw a tree drawn by children, which had its roots sunk into the ancient earth and branches with names, such as legality, memory, liberty, justice.



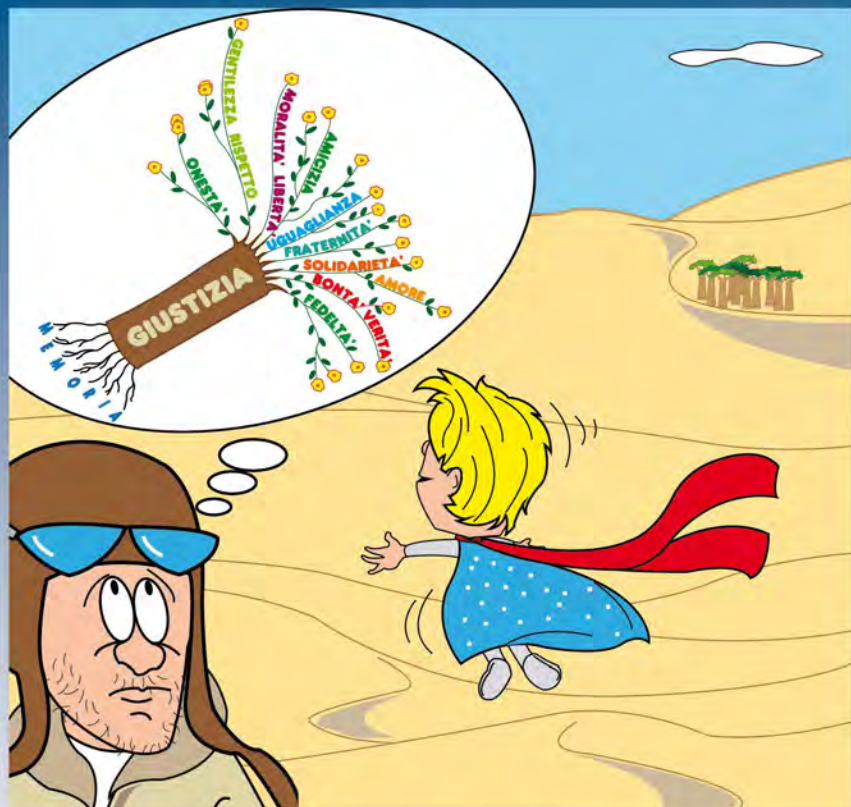
He got on his knees and tried to draw it on the sand. But it was as if his hand was blocked by an invisible force! The Little Prince observed curiously, shaking his head from time to time with a fluttering wave of hair. He seemed to be able to see through the pilot what he was trying to represent: "What are you doing, are you not able to draw what you clearly have in mind? Or are you making fun of me like the last time?" .



He was right. Antoine remembered the drawings he had done for the Little Prince the last time they had met: like the sheep, whose horns he had clumsily drawn. He had been very demanding then! In the end he had managed to draw a box with three holes on it, for him to imagine what was inside.



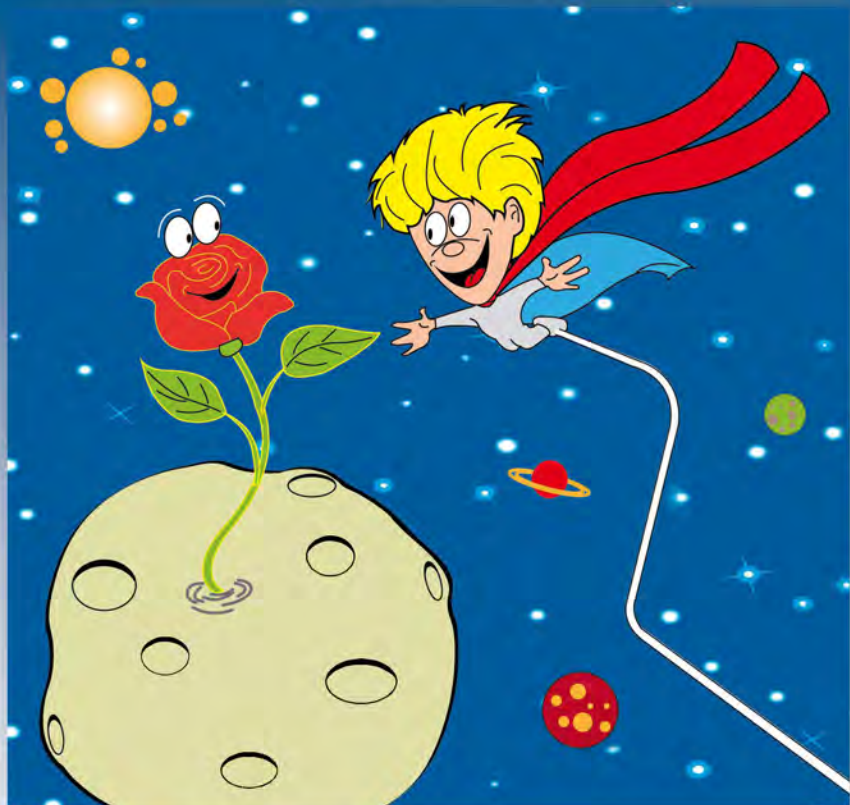
"Come on, try again! Don't be discouraged, the Little Prince continued – almost to soften his dry and disarming question: "Thanks to your drawings, last time I appreciated the baobab and the rose of my house, the asteroid B612!"



But you are right! Me too, I've never seen a tree like this! Even though I have visited many stars and planets! Those names, liberty, truth, justice ... what do they mean? Try again, calmly!"



He stood by, looking slyly at the pilot, while Antoine moved his trembling finger, trying to explain: "Peace ... means ...!", but every attempt got lost in the sand and in the air, as if an invincible force restrained his hand and tongue.



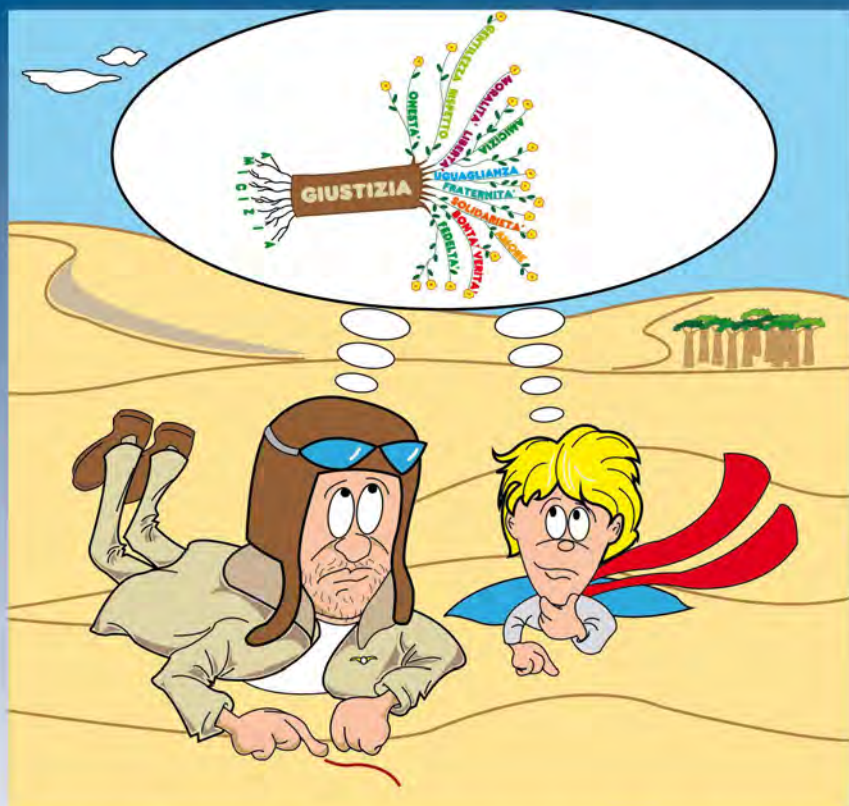
The Little Prince, maybe trying to relieve his embarrassment, went on: "Before coming back here to meet you again, I had returned to my asteroid to greet my rose", and at this name he couldn't hold back a sob.



Then, once he recovered, he added: " Intrigued by our conversations, I left for the Milky Way to visit other asteroids, besides those I told you about, do you remember?". How could Antoine have forgotten that a wonderful cosmic tale, even though for the doctors it was only a delusion of the mind?



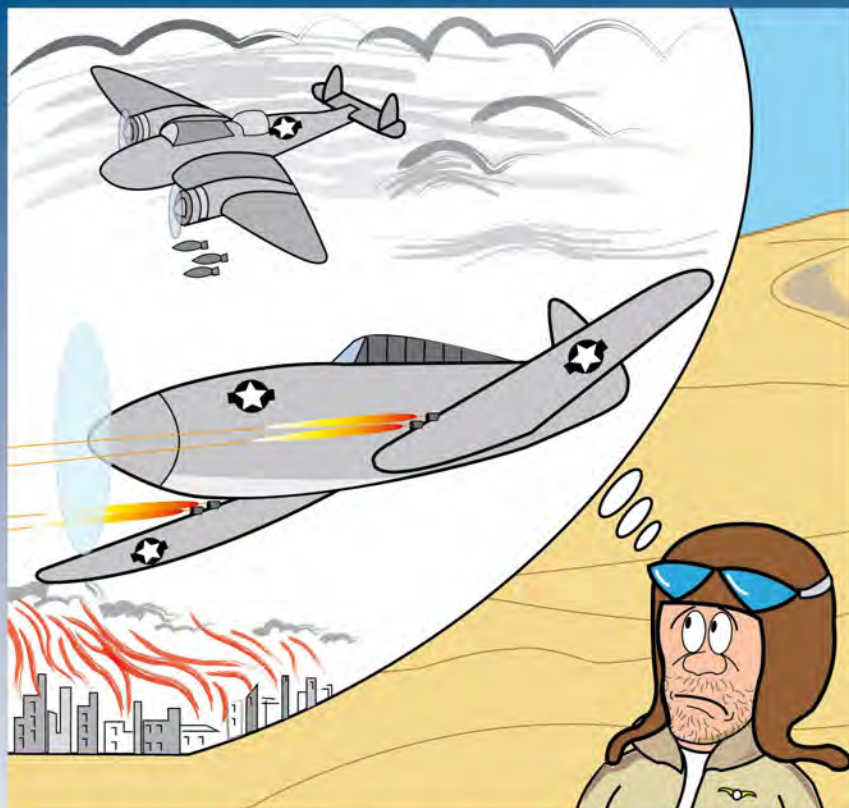
The Little Prince, indeed, had told him about some characters he had met, who inhabited the asteroids of the Milky Way: the King, the Drunkard, the Business Man, the Street Lighters, the Geographer! They too often emerged in his memories!



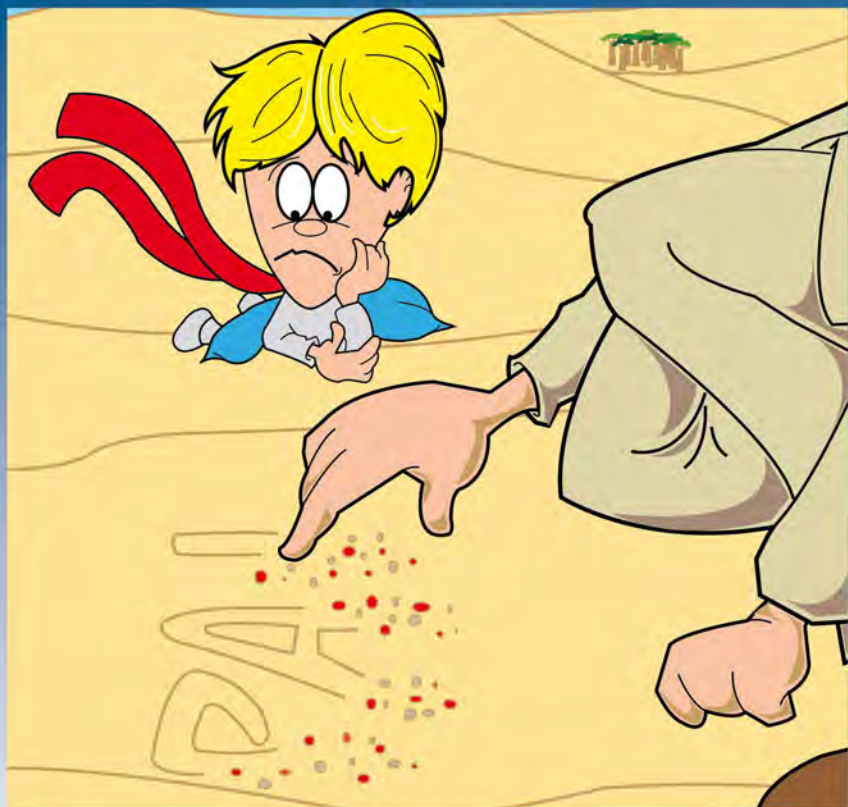
While Antoine seemed to wander in those memories, the Little Prince brought him back to his attempts. Puzzled, with a hand on his chin, the Little Prince observed the drawing that Antoine was in vain trying to sketch. "You're really right. There should be a plant like the one you are trying to draw. But only children can do it! Maybe I could help you!". And he stared at him with an intriguing look, while Antoine went on drawing with his trembling hand. What if the invisible, restraining force was nothing but his conscience?



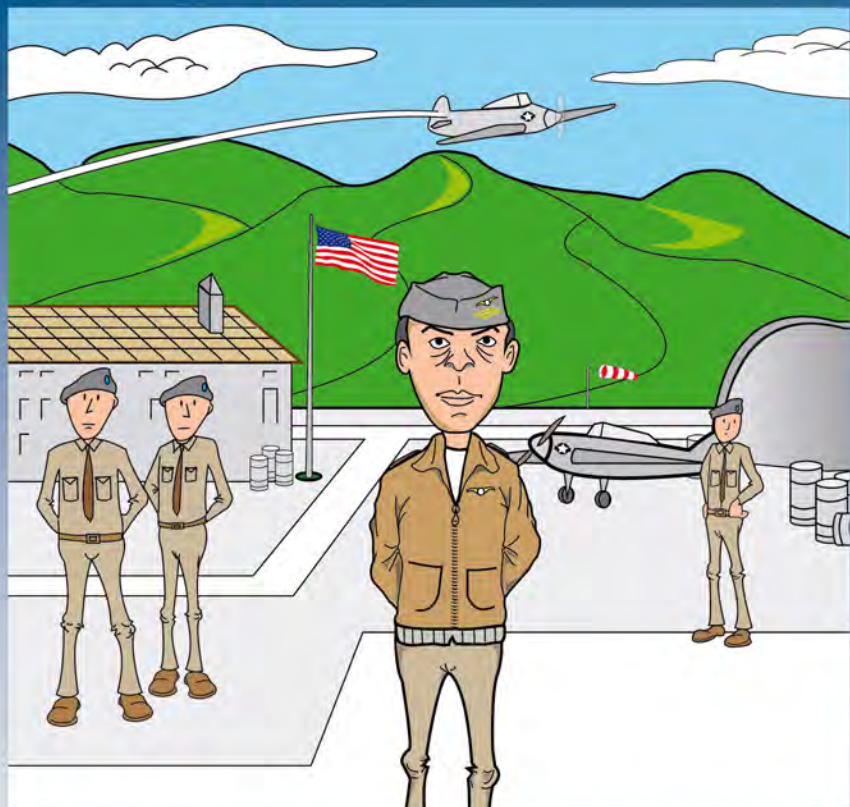
It was the end of July 1944. His thoughts went to over 6 million people, as reported in the newspapers, killed during the "Great War", as it had been called, and to the many people who were dying now in that second world conflict broken out after only thirty years! And he felt a sharp stabbing pain in his soul. How many destructions, how many killings would there still be with the increasingly powerful and devastating weapons employed? Rumors reported that Germany and the United States of America were competing in order to be the first to build an atomic bomb with enriched uranium.



And he shivered, looking secretly at the plane he was so proud of, with which until a few days ago he had bombarded enemy targets, causing –who knows– what “collateral damages”, like people used to call that atrocity! What if this sudden landing hadn’t been intended by some mysterious force, case or providence? He thought back to the impeccable engine inexplicably blocked and to the mad beat of the radioactive sensor when the Little Prince approached to hug him. Which one of the two was contaminating? And why?



Antoine raised his eyes to the Little Prince who seemed to continue to read his soul, then he resumed drawing, but his hand was still trembling in the attempt to write some letters of the word "peace", twisted and soaked with red drops. "What does it mean?", the Little Prince asked again, staring at him sadly. He must certainly see all his shame inside, Antoine thought.



"Peace is that thing _", Antoine stuttered again, but he knew that he was contributing to its opposite, the War, since the Air Army Command, after having considered him unsuitable for years because of the first accident, had immediately enlisted him again in the airforce as soon as the United States had entered the war against Hitler's Reich, a war that was subjugating all Europe. He looked down asking himself: "what could happen if we can't stop that Nazi fanatic?".



So, was all the destruction and death necessary? Was it necessary to kill? Did right wars really exist!? What a paradox, and he shook his head while he wanted to cry! In the meantime the word drawn on the reddish sand disappeared, leaving only a question mark Antoine looked down at that little being, who had returned from the other part of the world, perhaps to question his conscience and that of humanity.



Interrupting that suffering of an impossible drawing, the Little Prince sat next to Antoine and began to tell his story, as if it was a fairytale.



"Once I had greeted the rose, a little bit sad for the new departure, on the first asteroid, I met a being of your kind. He was standing close to a large fountain, from which sparkling pure gold came out, that dripped into a nearby well, without ever filling it because it had no bottom. Very elegant, with a dark suit, a bowler on his head and a bow tie and starched white shirt, he took very little drops that he put into a strange contraption which, as if by magic, immediately printed endless banknotes of different sizes and nationalities, dollars, yen, marks, euro, rubles.



Impeccably, with great speed, sometimes wearing shiny golden glasses, he divided them into many piles, ordering them in a closet that slowly turned around him, very large and very high, like an impassable Great Wall of golden bricks.



"Who are you? What are you doing?", he asked him shyly. "Can't you imagine? I create wealth. I am a finance manager", answered the other one raising his finger to reproach, proud of himself, but surprised by the ignorance of that little fluttering thing.



So, returning to his infinite ritual, he captured with ability another drop, putting it into the still.



"Wonderful, wealth for everyone! So there won't be any more poverty in the world?" the Little Prince insisted. "And what do I know? With each bribe you can buy anything, even the soul! It has always been like this and it always will be!" the man concluded disdainfully and rubbing his hands he plunged back into his work, worried that the little intruder would dare to ask again.



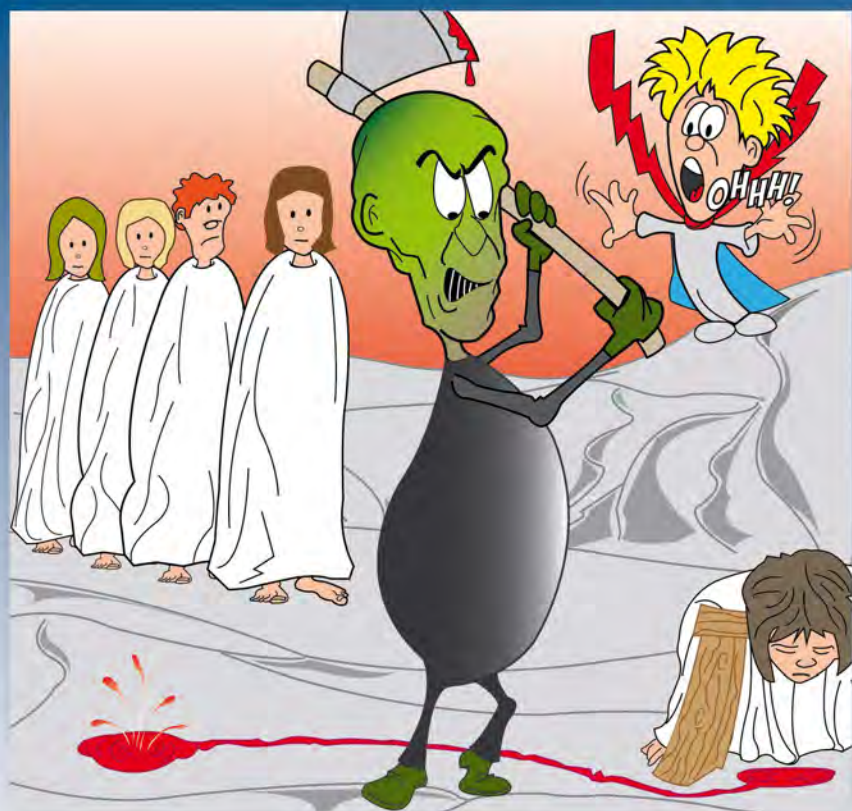
But he had no intention of doing so and mumbling a goodbye. He had flown away vertically, leaving that asteroid that from afar looked like a treasure chest with golden cabinets inside with lots of drawers from which wads and wads of money appeared.



At this point, the Little Prince, almost to be sure that Antoine was listening to him, stopped talking for a few moments remaining in silence. Then, shrugging his thin shoulders, he bent down and, where Antoine had begun, with his small index finger he lightly outlined on the sand a curve like a comma. Afterwards, staring at him with an encouraging smile, he resumed telling the story.



He had continued his journey in the Milky Way, until another asteroid had intrigued him for its strange shape and its dull red halo around it. Coming down he had smelt an acrid smell and heard the endless echo of a howl. He had to watch out for cracks and deep craters on the surface, before gliding onto the path of a hill.



Here there was a strange black figure, with a gruff nose and a body like a cockroach, who, with a huge axe, was chopping off the heads of people with clean cuts, almost all women, each one covered by a white tunic, who, bare foot walking in line, in turns lie down on a sort of guillotine.



Every detached head disappeared into the open space with a piercing cry, while the blood, soaking the white tunics, splashed copiously into a basin, from where it was channelled to become a gushing red fountain.



The Little Prince wanted to scream to stop, to run and interrupt that unstoppable chain of bloody slaughter. But he couldn't, he was paralyzed like in an invisible scene of terror. He watched shivering at other scenes. A strangled cry finally came out of his throat: "Stop! What are you doing? Who are you?", he asked the grim figure.



"I'm the Executioner", he answered with his macabre voice echoing in the infinite space. "But why are you doing all this? What faults do these poor people have?". "I don't know and I don't want to. Women already have the fault of being themselves. But I don't care" the man answered slightly raising his eyes in while another severed head flew away.



"I must do this. My Chief gave me this order, just like he was ordered by his father, who was given the same order by his grandfather, and so on. It must be done in this way! It's the law of the Chief!". "And where does the blood go?" the Little Prince insisted, while a retching raised from his stomach. "It must be collected and spread to the world!", the annoyed black figure specified. "But why, and when will it end?". "Ugh! I don't know and I don't want to, I told you already. It's the law of the Chief. I will stop when it won't be like this anymore". He turned grimly, holding his axe, like a threatening beast.



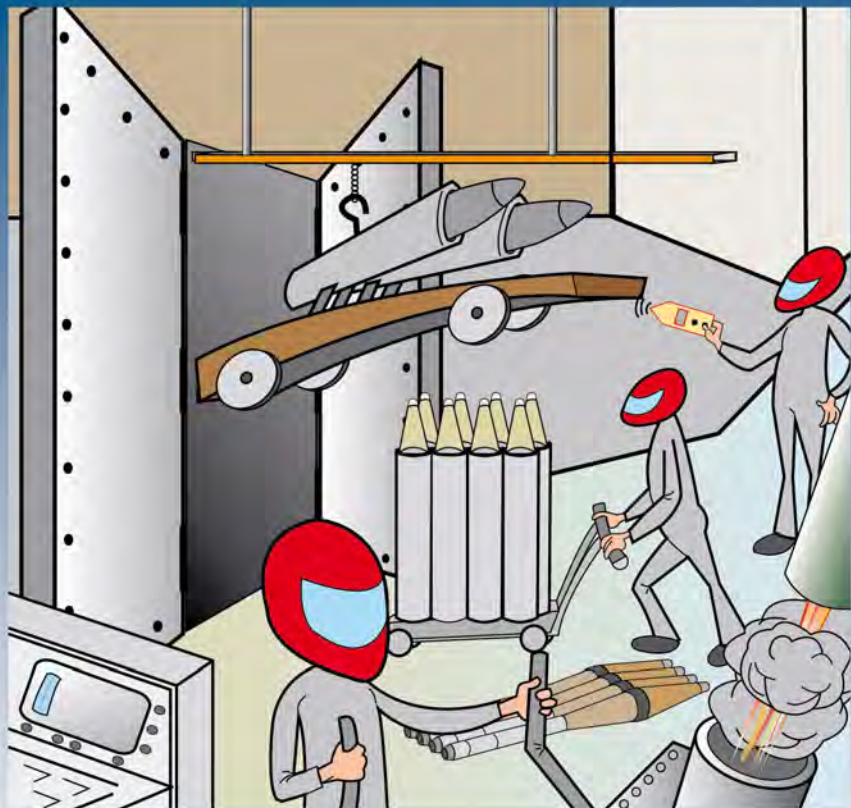
The Little Prince couldn't resist any longer. He was really scared! He run precipitously down the hill, stopping by only for a moment to throw up. Then he flew away, while another head was disappearing in the open space with another excruciating cry. From the distance, he could better distinguish the shape of the asteroid: a skull surrounded by a red halo of bloody heads. It was in that moment that some of his golden locks turned to silver.



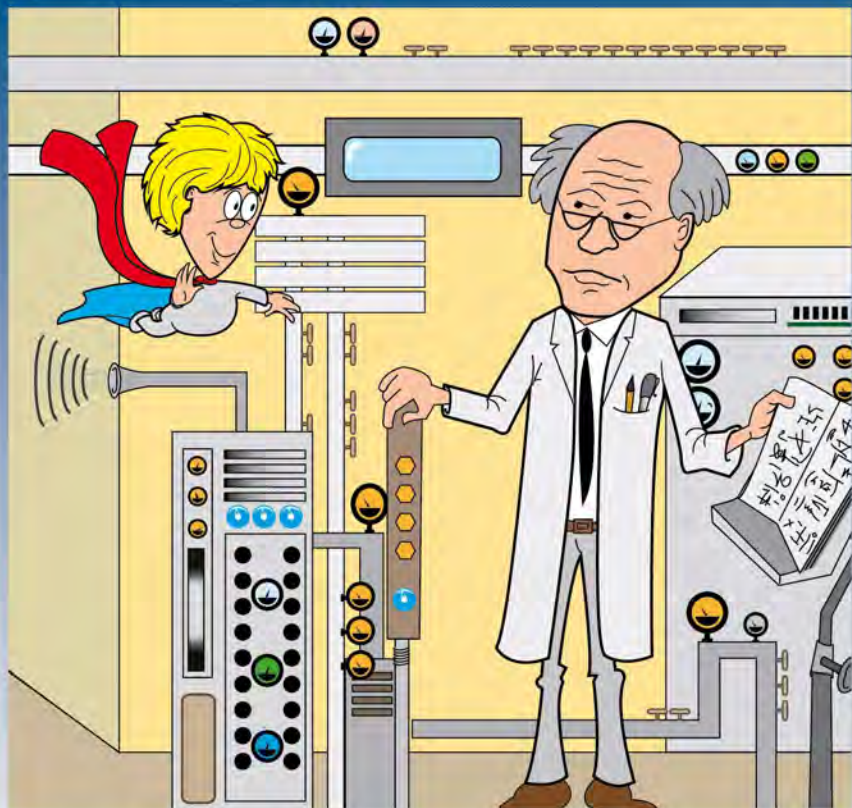
Antoine wanted to hug the Little Prince, who seemed to shiver as he was bringing back those terrible memories. At that moment he could clearly observe the thin white lock that furrowed his blond hair. And the little creature, comforted by the reassuring presence of Antoine, resumed narrating.



He had continued to wander in the cosmos a little lost, then he had glided on another asteroid, intrigued by its shape, that reminded him a plant, like the baobab that Antoine had drawn years ago, he specified, almost describing it in the air with his little hands. Around it pops and crackles could be heard as coloured glimps of light were shining in the sky, just like the fireworks during village fairs, there on earth, he imagined, asking for Antoine's confirmation, who nodded.



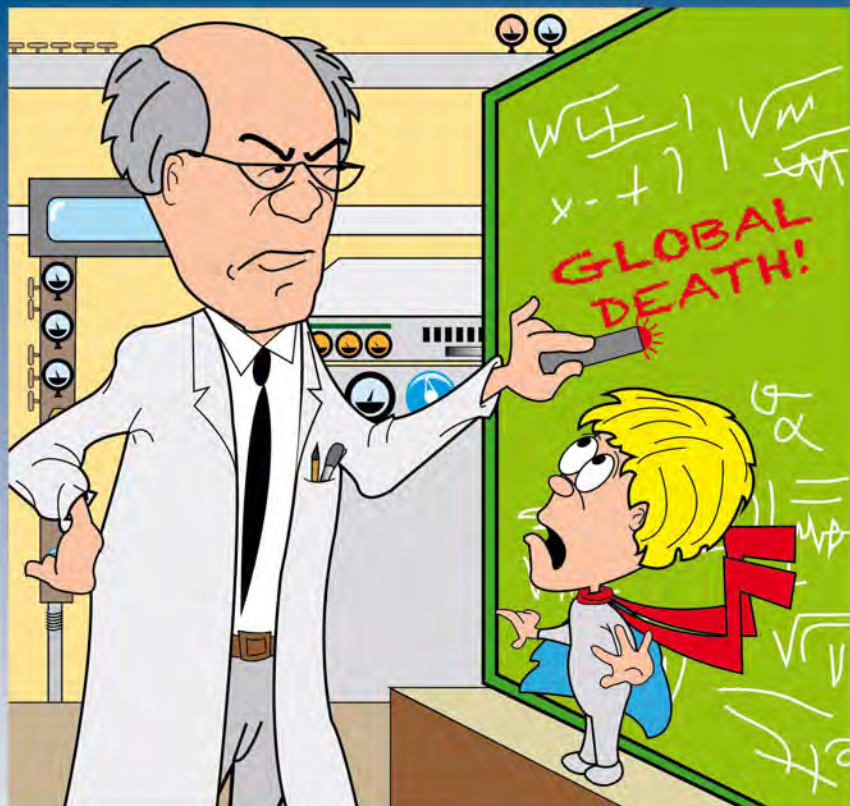
He then found himself walking in a sort of square, where the fireworks and lightning became more intense and shining as he progressed. In the centre, from a huge dark tunnel suspended rails came out, carrying large dark wagons containing long, overlapping pipes. Two robotic figures in laminated camouflage suits, wearing fluorescent helmets to cover their faces, after setting the direction, fired many hissing, flaming missiles, without rest.



The Little Prince wanted to ask them who they were, but, a bit for the deafening noise, a bit because he saw no one behind the dark shiny helmets, he headed for the quieter little square next to it. He arrived in front of the entrance to a high, mushroom-shaped building, that looked like a flying saucer with lots of illuminated windows. At the entrance a figure in a white coat was using sophisticated instruments, computers, stills, counters, sometimes noting down on a book open on a lectern next to him. The Little Prince observed him for a while, fascinated by that little person with bushy white hair and thick glasses that was supposed to be a scientist.



Raising his eyes and focussing on him authoritatively behind the lenses, with professorial attitude he answered: "We are the Defenders". Seeing him puzzled, he added: "This is the cybernetic-bacteriological-nuclear-atomic sector! There –pointing to the square next to the robotic people- we test traditional weapons, cannons, missiles, machine gun, bazooka, flamethrowers, for that part of the world where it's necessary to destroy and kill without the complete elimination of the enemy, for commercial and financial reasons! Here, on the other hand, we scientists have a more advanced task, the total extermination! We prepare atomic reactions, bacteria to spread diseases, to poison food, water, even the atmosphere!" he proudly grinned.



"I don't understand", the Little Prince said "defenders of who and from what, if I only saw you in this little asteroid?". "We don't know, nobody does. For this, there are Secret Services that know what everyone ignores. In short, the Big Brother" he specified with a low voice "We only have to study, search, try and be ready! In terms of death, humanity is unpredictable and very demanding!". And in saying this he took out a flashing pen from a pocket in his shirt, he concentrated on a formula to which he added, satisfied, in red the word Global Death!



Worried and carefully avoiding to pass by the place where the crackles continued incessantly, the Little Prince preferred to leave that asteroid whose mushroom shape was now clearer to him.



So the Little Prince went quiet again for a few instants, mumbling names that to Antoine seemed like ... Auschwitz, Nagasaki, Hiroshima, Darfour, Dachau, Srebrenica, Rakka ... then, with an absorbed expression, he bent over and added another stroke to the draft of the drawing on the sand and, reassured, he resumed the story.



Continuing to wander free in the Milky Way, he had noticed, not far from the previous one, an asteroid that stood out pearly in the sky with a bright rainbow halo around it. He had been attracted to it, also because he felt coming from it a winning beat that vibrated inside as if to unintentionally captivate him.



He descended into a square surrounded by several buildings, some with golden domes, others were high rounded towers, looking like pencils, others were wood pagodas on stilts... All around, here and there, statues, idols, totems, altars of various shapes and colours.



In the centre there was a flame: it didn't rest on anything, but it was burning suspended silent and eternal, with a big eye inside, impossible to look at for a long time. Towards it, people slowly advanced in a row. Some were covered by gorgeous clothes with gold and silver necklaces, with diamonds and diadems, even skulls, bones and teeth! Some of them wore simple tunics, orange, violet or brown; others white sheets and others big knickers or torn rags. Many of them wore high and golden hats or impressive turbans, others feathers on their heads.



Each one of them was prostrating himself or herself in front of the flame, solemnly repeating, sometimes singing and dancing: "You are the only true God and I am your only interpreter!". Everyone ignored the other, even if they were close, as if they were separated by an invisible barrier. However, once they passed the point before the light, in a square in front of a temple with different facades, domes and roofs, they were able to see each other like it was the first time, and each one began to shout: "My God is the only true God".



They reproached each other, they quarrelled, and they got in fights, until a signal, the sound of a horn, stopped them and everything started all over again. Each one going back to the queue to return to parade as before towards the light. And so on.



At first, the Little Prince had observed, fascinated by the colours, sounds and the ritual of veneration. Then, amazed by the lack of communication that prevented people from talking to each other, though sharing the same feelings of faith, during a break, he asked the one closest to him and dressed in a shiny cassock: "Who are you and what are you doing?" "That light is God and I am his priest, the only guide that leads to him and to the truth". But while he was saying this, the music resumed and the person, adjusting his hat, quickly got back in line.



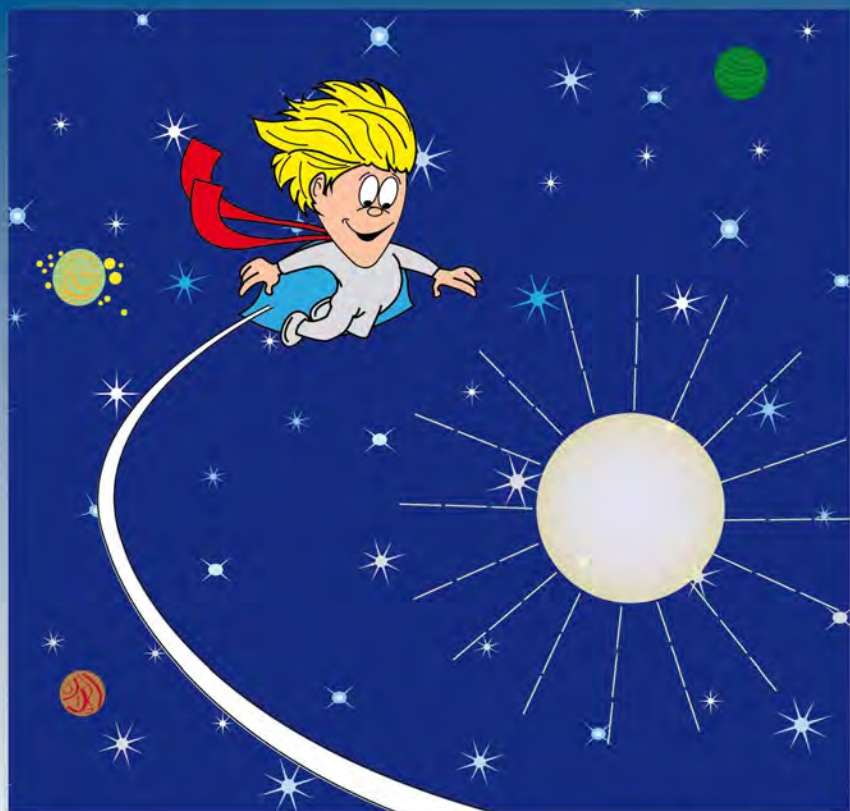
The Little Prince observed him repeating completely some gestures, the genuflection up to the light, then in front of the temple he unleashed his rage again, beating other people and shouting: "Mine is the only God". At the following sound of the horn, when the fight was over, before resuming his place, that priest had approached to him and looking with suspicion he had asked him: "You, with this strange starlit cloak, who are you, where do you come from? I've never seen you before. Are you faithful or unfaithful? Do you honour my God?". And while he was talking, he pierced him with eyes that had become penetrating and evil. "I don't know, I was passing here by chance, I live on another asteroid" the Little Prince had stammered. "But at least, do you know the formula?", the other one had continued while the music was calling him back to the ritual.



The Little Prince didn't know what to answer. Confused and embarrassed, he took advantage to fly away. He was wondering, didn't God have to be the same light, recognized by everyone? Looking at the stars, he remembered that one day he had heard about a certain Babel, inquisitions, sacred wars, tortures and human rogues: all in the name of God. While he was going away, he saw the gray spot of the fighting priests disappearing below, while their singsong was getting lost in space.



At this point, the Little Prince, who was narrating this last stage, became a bit dark, paused again. Then, stooping, he added another short stretch that seemed to begin to give shape to the drawing; so, as inspired by what he was about to say, he resumed the story.



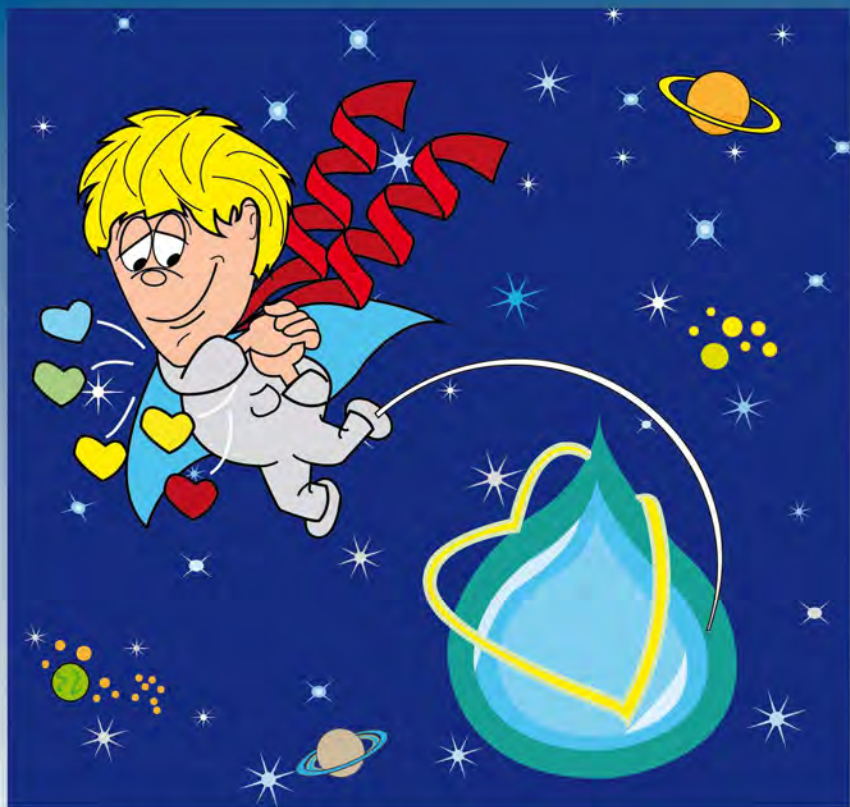
Continuing the journey, he had arrived to a small and clear asteroid, like a pearl surrounded by golden rays, he whispered ecstatically, a place he would have never wanted to leave! He had glided on an esplanade: a carpet covered with stars.



At the centre, sitting on a candid cloud, there was a thin woman with a light blue mantle and her head covered with a black veil. Her smile was tender and sad, her neck was slightly inclined. Her arms stretched out on her stomach showing a will to hug and caress, with her tapered hands, the body of the world.



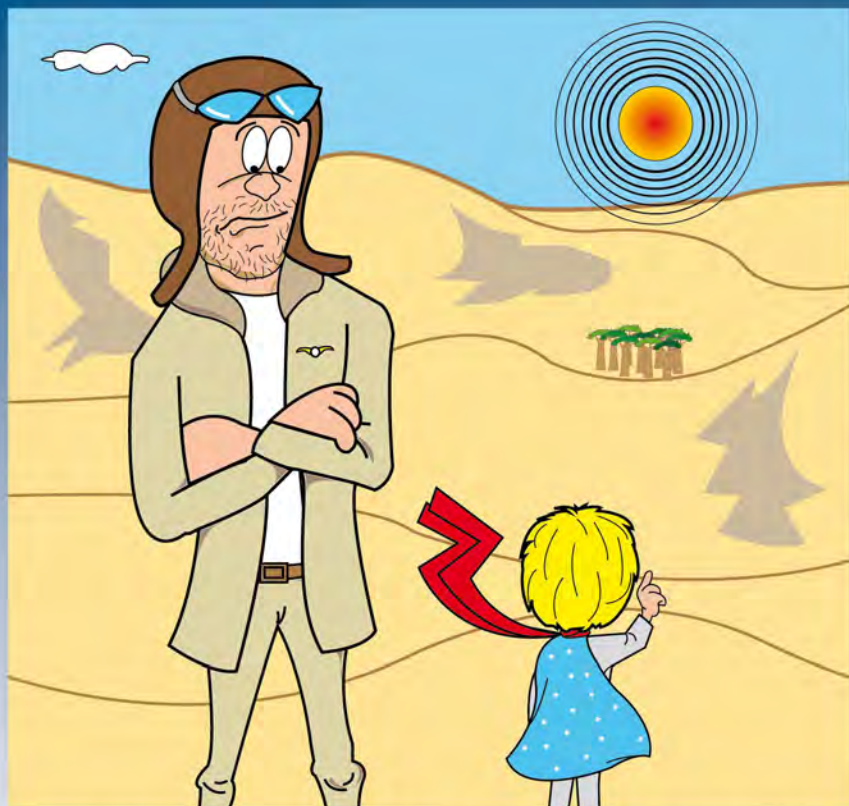
Lighted tears descended slowly along her cheeks. The Little Prince approached to her, almost hovering on tiptoes. "Who are you, beautiful Lady?", he asked with a chirp. "The Mother of all children, wherever they are", she answered with a whisper of music spreading across the firmament. "And what about your Mother, where is she?", the Little Prince continued with a voice cracked by emotion. "In love I am the mother of myself, of he that will come- and she softly caressed her belly- and of all the children in the world!". "Can I dry your tear?". With her eyelids she beat an invisible yes. The Little Prince took out a little tissue from his green overalls and he extended his hand very gently. Holding his breath he wiped away a tear. He looked at it, kissed it and put it carefully into his pocket, that seemed to lighten up, exactly on his heart. But another tear appeared again on the cheek of the beautiful Lady, at the point where he had just taken off the previous one.



The Little Prince, not knowing what to say, greeted her with a sigh: "Good-bye, good-bye Mother of all!", happy about the meeting, but also sad about that endless cry, he flew away from that asteroid that, after a better look, had the shape of a celestial tear surrounded by a heart-shaped halo.



At this point of the narrative, the Little Prince remained absorbed for a few moments. He looked tired and moved. Then, sighing, he intensely looked at Antoine. His eyes were shiny: "Dear friend, by now I can call you like this".



He almost groaned and looked up at the sky, staring at a star that shone with intermittences that looked like signals to which the little stars of his coat seemed to answer. "Here, the moment is coming! I must go! This time my friend the snake won't help me, but you will".



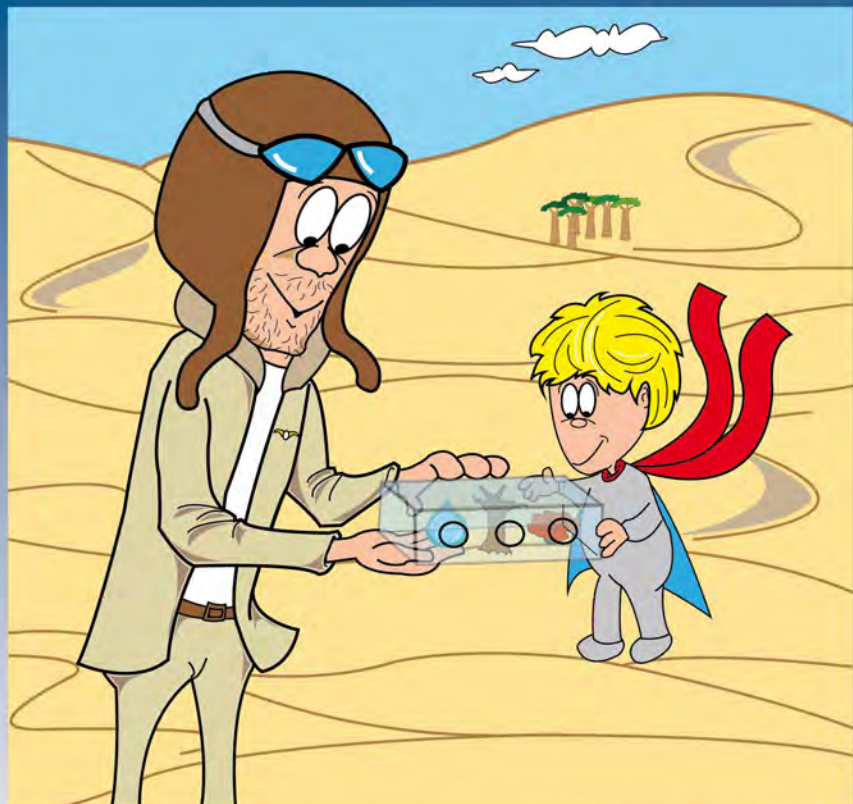
Antoine stepped back, shivering at the memory of when, in the first meeting, he had seen the Little Prince, from the low wall on which he had climbed, talking to the snake, which had bit him on the ankle with a flash of lightning. Had he put him to sleep or had he killed him? With that terrible doubt all the memories of that era ended.



"No, what are you thinking? We just have met again and now you already want to leave me?", Antoine shouted standing up with one click: "Let's leave together! I will repair the plane and we will fly wherever you want! Or else, we will stay here! We will draw, talk and laugh! We will marvellously stay together!". "No. I really must go. The moment has come! They are calling me from up there. I told them that I had to meet my friend Antoine: the man who received from me a special gift and who will help me to come back home!", he confirmed with indisputable tone, but tender and sad. Antoine didn't know what to say. His eyes were swollen with tears and a lump tightened his throat. "Don't leave me, please! –he answered in a sob– And so, how could I help you?".



"By embracing me, embracing me tight!", the Little Prince answered and his eyes also moistened, while he was trying to calm him: "I won't leave you alone. You will remember me in the gift that I have for you and for all those who live on your planet, the Earth, as you call it!". And saying this, he took out from his pocket under the mantle, on the side of his heart, a small box with three holes on one side. "Do you see? It's like the one you drew for me the first time. I called it "Nohate" and inside there are the goods dear to me". And he gave it to him, caressing it with his little hands that became paler and almost trembling.



Inside it Antoine could see and feel with his soul: the tear of the beautiful Lady, shiny like a diamond; the small plant of peace that he hadn't been able to draw; the corolla of a rose throbbing like a little heart.



"You know, my friend- the Little Prince explained to Antoine who was observing him speechless- after having spoken with the beautiful Lady, I thought a lot about our first meeting, about you and your airplane, about the war that is being fought on Earth. I wanted and I had to meet you and give you my gift! Also for this reason I had gone home, on my asteroid, to ask my rose. It was there, waiting for me, red, in love and beautiful, like the first time. We gazed at each other. I understood. It was a moment: "I am ready, my Little Prince -it whispered faintly- for you to bring anywhere on earth, beauty, peace and love".



"And this saying, it had bent wavered in the wind, that gently rocked it while its blush was fading. It had relaxed, exhaling the last fragrant breath of life! What a pity and what a sweetness! The sheep you had drawn bleated in an infinite cry. The petals had flown in the sky, veiled in gray."



On my knees I picked up the corolla which I still felt palpitating, I kissed it and I put it into the "Nohate".



"Now my rose's heart is here and I entrust it to you, my friend, together with the beautiful Lady's tear and the tree of peace!". The Little Prince, while he was narrating, didn't hide his great emotion he had felt in that moment of sacrifice, of hope and love. He dried two big overbearing, burning tears. So he got even closer to Antoine, offering him the "Nohate" box. "Take it with you, please. When you'll go back home on Earth, you will find a blessed hill, near a lake, where you will lay it".



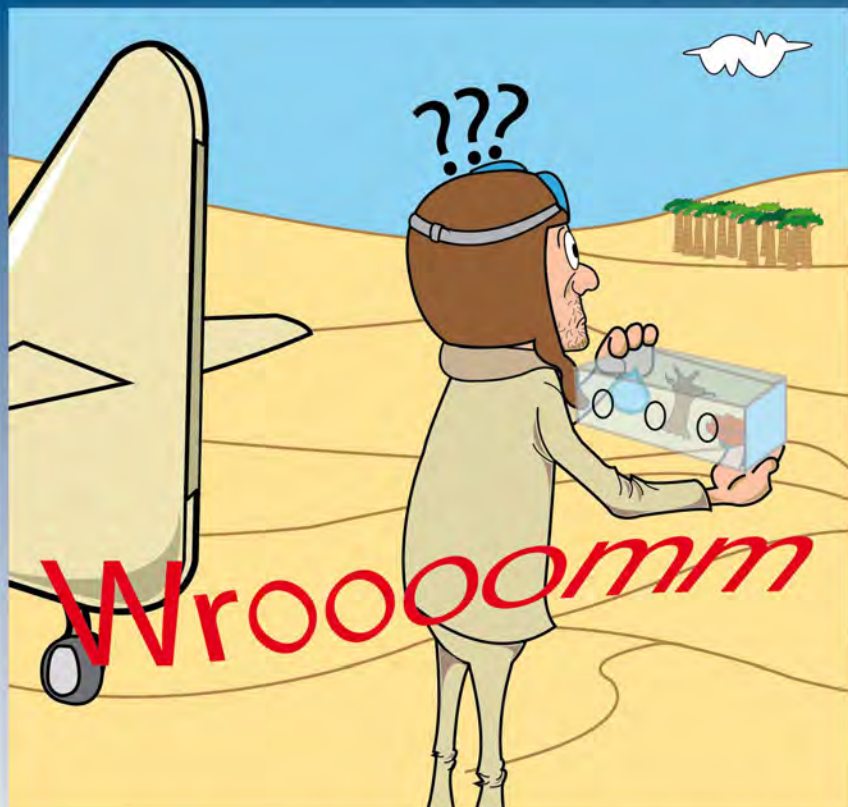
In the meanwhile, the box had hovered, remaining suspended above them, almost to bless that act of love. The Little Prince abandoned himself shyly and secure, tender and strong, on Antoine's chest, who opened his arms to embrace him very slowly. He was afraid to hurt him, seeing him become so fragile, evanescent, pure, invisible.



It was a moment of eternity, a light, a thrill, a sweet music. Antoine found himself embracing no one but himself: the Little Prince wasn't there anymore, as if he had entered into his soul. How much time had passed? Was it still a delusion?



Heavy tears fell from his face on the reddish sand, on the traits of the drawing sketched by the Little Prince.



Antoine looked around, he was alone. He grabbed the small box with his trembling hands. It was hot and light, as if it was alive! The slight start of the engine behind him made him jump. The red light was now flashing green. The airplane was now ready and whippy again.



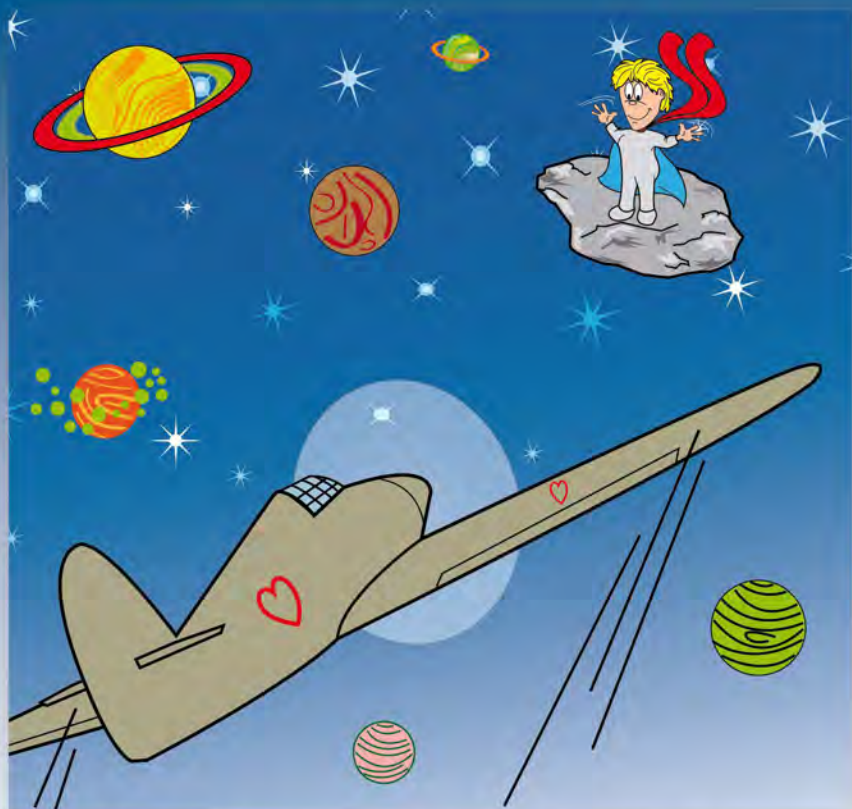
He observed for a while the deserted expanse and the dark spot of the wood. He really was alone! He carefully got up, holding on his chest the "Nohate".



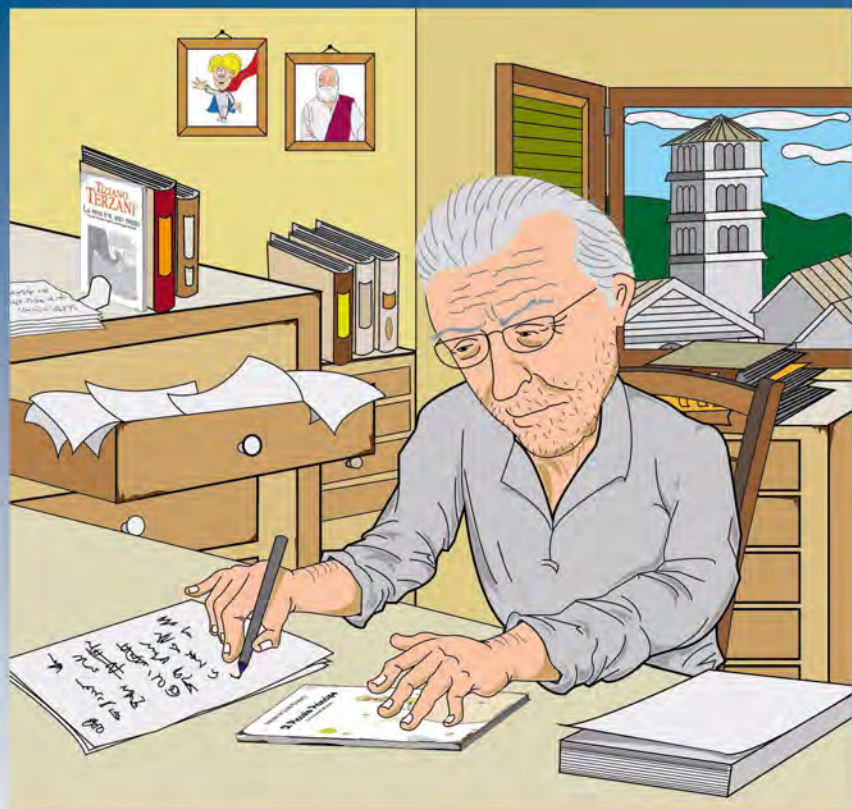
He entered into the nacelle. He placed the box in front of him on the plank, with a devoted caress. He still hoped! Nothing. His eyes became veiled with tears.



He increased the number of laps, he pushed the cloche and the rumbling airplane took off into the sky, towards the star fading with glints that seemed to say: "Good-bye, my friend, good-bye!". He looked below one last time. On the reddish sand a perfect indelible bright heart had been drawn. The same heart, only smaller, had replaced the military emblem of the Army on the airplane.



It is not known if Antoine the pilot managed to land somewhere else. Perhaps he continued to chase the star. We like to think that he has reached it and that now the two friends are talking, smiling, drawing, happily together! One thing is for sure: the "Nohate" hasn't ever reached the Earth and on that hill next to the lake, perhaps called Golgotha, there are three crosses, stained with blood. Anyone who has news of Antoine, of the Little Prince, or sees the "Nohate" or maybe a tree of peace, is asked to report immediately! Perhaps one day, who knows!



I believe that each one of us has inside himself an asteroid with its Little Prince and his rose. I learnt it when I was a child. I met him in the book my mother Angela gave me, who in turn had received it from her mother. I have read it several times during my life spent as Don Quichotte. It is as if he had grown with me. I have even imagined him with a white beard like Tiziano Terzani when he wrote the book "the end is my Beginning". Today, full of years and bruises, I still feel the Little Prince with his little fluffy and timeless smile, pawing in his hope for peace. Could it have been him to inspire me for this second meeting at the Abbey of Farfa?

Ennio Di Francesco
The return of the little Prince

I met Ennio Di Francesco in 2005 in Pescara, where he had organised a meeting entitled "Emilio Alessandrini and Tiziano Terzani: Seekers of Truth and Justice," in memory of his school friend Emilio Alessandrini, a magistrate who had been killed in Milan years earlier by the terrorist group Red Brigades. The room was completely full of people, some having come from abroad. There were lots of young people. He had put up large portraits on the walls of Tiziano, who with his candid beard seemed to be smiling at everybody. There was also a drawing of the Tree of Peace, done by the children from Emilio Alessandrini Primary school in Ari, a small village in Abruzzo. It was tender to hear them, dressed in their little blue uniforms, reading their poems together with phrases taken from Tiziano's book "The End is my Beginning." It was difficult to tell them apart. With Ennio we immediately got along greatly. He then came to visit us at Orsogna, and my son Folco took him to visit the "gompa" where Tiziano's life on Earth had ended. One could feel his emotion. I would like to imagine my husband while he reads "The Return of the Little Prince," smiling with Antoine de Saint Exupery and Emilio Alessandrini. Thank you Ennio and enjoy the book everybody.

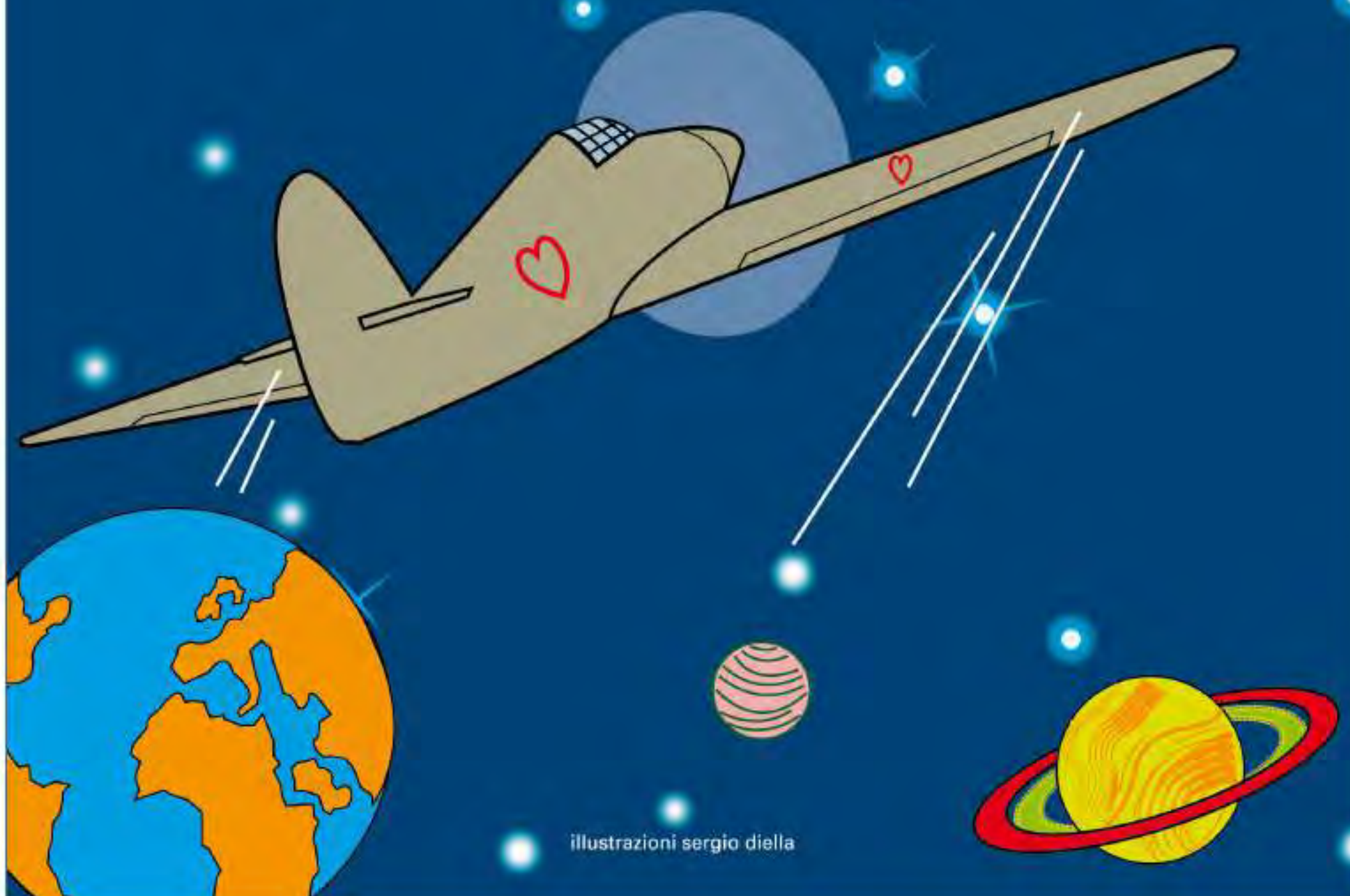
Angela Terzani Staude

I read "The Return of the Little Prince" by Ennio Di Francesco. It's full of imagination and hope.

Dacia Maraini

ENNIO DI FRANCESCO

The End



illustrazioni sergio diella