

## The Novel at a Glance

### BACKGROUND

The author of *The Little Prince* was a French pilot named Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. He wrote this novel during World War II while he was living in America, having escaped from his native France after the Nazis took over the country in 1940. He published this novel in 1943, and later that same year, he returned to France to fight for his homeland in the war. He rejoined a French air squadron stationed in northern Africa and, on July 31, 1944, flew out over the Mediterranean Sea to run a mission over his occupied country. He was never seen again.

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**The pilot** is the narrator of the novel, a man who has crashed his airplane in the middle of the African desert. He wants to repair his plane to return home but is distracted when he meets the little prince. The pilot also remembers his childhood fondly and has a mistrust and misunderstanding of adults.

**The little prince** approaches and befriends the pilot in the desert. He is a traveler from another planet who is seeking a way to return to his home and to his flower. He asks many questions of everyone he meets. He, however, answers no questions.

### VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Look at the passage from Chapter XV, pages 46–47, in which the little prince asks repeatedly, “What does *ephemeral* mean?” *Ephemeral* means “lasting a very short time.” The **etymology**, or origin, of a word gives its history and shows where it comes from. You will be researching the etymology of words from *The Little Prince*.

#### Chapters I–XV

monarch, p. 29  
admire, p. 34  
ephemeral, p. 46

#### Chapters XVI–XXVII

extinct, p. 53  
monotonous, p. 59  
fragile, p. 68