She would be very annoyed, he said to himself, if she saw this... She would cough terribly and pretend to be dying, to avoid being laughed at. And I'd have to pretend to be nursing her; otherwise, she'd really let herself die in order to humiliate me.

And then he said to himself, I thought I was rich because I had just one flower, and all I own is an ordinary rose. That and my three volcanoes, which come up to my knee, one of which may be permanently extinct. It doesn't make me much of a prince... And he lay down in the grass and wept.

XXI

It was then that the fox appeared.

“Good morning,” said the fox.
“Good morning,” the little prince answered politely, though when he turned around he saw nothing.

“I’m here,” the voice said, “under the apple tree.”

“Who are you?” the little prince asked. “You’re very pretty…”

“I’m a fox,” the fox said.

“Come and play with me,” the little prince proposed. “I’m feeling so sad.”

“I can’t play with you,” the fox said. “I’m not tamed.”

“Ahh! Excuse me,” said the little prince. But upon reflection he added, “What does tamed mean?”

“You’re not from around here,” the fox said. “What are you looking for?”

“I’m looking for people,” said the little prince. “What does tamed mean?”

“People,” said the fox, “have guns and they hunt. It’s quite troublesome. And they also raise chickens. That’s the only interesting thing about them. Are you looking for chickens?”

“No,” said the little prince, “I’m looking for friends. What does tamed mean?”

“It’s something that’s been too often neglected. It means, ‘to create ties’…”

“To create ties?”

“That’s right,” the fox said. “For me you’re only a little boy just like a hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need of you. And you have no need of me, either. For you I’m only a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But if you tame me, we’ll need each other. You’ll be the only boy in the world for me. I’ll be the only fox in the world for you…”

“I’m beginning to understand,” the little prince said. “There’s a flower… I think she’s tamed me…”

“Possibly,” the fox said. “On Earth, one sees all kinds of things.”

“Oh, this isn’t on Earth,” the little prince said.

The fox seemed quite intrigued. “On another planet?”

“Yes,”

“Are there hunters on that planet?”

“No,”

“Now that’s interesting. And chickens?”

“No,”

“Nothing’s perfect,” sighed the fox. But he returned to his idea. “My life is monotonous. I hunt chickens; people hunt me. All chickens are just alike, and all men are
just alike. So I'm rather bored. But if you tame me, my life will
be filled with sunshine. I'll know the sound of footsteps that will
be different from all the rest. Other footsteps send me back
underground. Yours will call me out of my burrow like music.
And then, look! You see the wheat fields over there? I don't eat
bread. For me wheat is of no use whatever. Wheat fields say
nothing to me. Which is sad. But you have hair the color of gold.
So it will be wonderful, once you've tamed me! The wheat, which
is golden, will remind me of you. And I'll love the sound of the
wind in the wheat . . ."

The fox fell silent and stared at the little prince for a long
while. "Please . . . tame me!" he said.

"I'd like to," the little prince replied, "but I haven't much
time. I have friends to find and so many things to learn."

"The only things you learn are the things you tame," said the
fox. "People haven't time to learn anything. They buy things
ready-made in stores. But since there are no stores where you can
buy friends, people no longer have friends. If you want a friend,
tame me!"

"What do I have to do?" asked the little prince.

"You have to be very patient," the fox answered. "First you'll
sit down a little ways away from me, over there, in the grass. I'll
watch you out of the corner of my eye, and you won't say any-
thing. Language is the source of misunderstandings. But day by
day, you'll be able to sit a little closer . . ."

The next day the little prince returned.

"It would have been better to return at the same time," the
fox said. "For instance, if you come at four in the afternoon, I'll
begin to be happy by three. The closer it gets to four, the happier
I'll feel. By four I'll be all excited and worried; I'll discover what
it costs to be happy! But if you come at any old time, I'll never
know when I should prepare my heart . . . There must be rites."

"What's a rite?" asked the little prince.

"That's another thing that's been too often neglected," said
the fox. "It's the fact that one day is different from the other days,
one hour from the other hours. My hunters, for example, have a
rite. They dance with the village girls on Thursdays. So Thurs-
day's a wonderful day; I can take a stroll all the way to the vine-
yards. If the hunters danced whenever they chose, the days would
all be just alike, and I'd have no holiday at all."

THAT WAS HOW the little prince tamed the fox. And when the
time to leave was near:

"Ah!" the fox said. "I shall weep."

"It's your own fault," the little prince said. "I never wanted to
do you any harm, but you insisted that I tamed you . . ."

"Yes, of course," the fox said.

"But you're going to weep?" said the little prince.

"Yes, of course," the fox said.

"Then you get nothing out of it?"

"I get something," the fox said, "because of the color of the
wheat." Then he added, "Go look at the roses again. You'll