The Chair on the Top of the World

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Tomas wanted to sit on the top of the world.

He imagined a chair, a very specific chair. Dark blue wooden. Painted all over with white and yellow stars and moons. And, for some reason, a small unicorn. The chair was on top of a ladder. He told his friend Sarah about this.

Sarah was curious, “Where did you get this idea from?”

Tomas replied, “The Little Prince. He stood on top of his planet. And this is our planet. But I expect it’ll be a long walk there, so I’ll want a place to sit and look at the world when I am there. Which is why I expect there’ll be a chair.”

Sarah said, “Makes sense.”

They both sat and ate their lunches in the school cafeteria. Then Sarah asked, “Is there only one chair?”

“Yes,” replied Tomas.

“So I guess you have to go alone.”

“Yes,” replied Tomas again.

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The next day was Saturday and Tomas told his Father that he was going to find the chair on the top of the world.

His father asked the same questions as Sarah, so the conversation ended in the exact same way.

“I guess you have to go alone,” his Dad concluded.

“Yes,” replied Tomas.

His Dad put a peanut butter & jelly sandwich, a small apple, a bag of sunflower seeds, and three large graham crackers into a brown paper bag. On the bag, the Father drew a picture of a chair on top of a ladder. The picture of the chair was covered with small stars and moons.

There was no unicorn, but other than that, it was exactly what Tomas expected, which was reassuring.

So, with brown paper lunch bag in hand, Tomas set off to find the chair on the top of the world.
Tomas did not get far before he met a small unicorn.

“Where are you going?” asked the unicorn.

“To the chair on the top of the world,” said Tomas. “Do you know where it is?”

The unicorn shook its head. “I’d look on top of the mountain,” offered the unicorn, pointing its small horn towards a mountain off in the distance.

“That’s a very tall mountain,” said Tomas.

“It is,” said the unicorn. “Would you like me to come with you?”

“Yes,” said Tomas, but added, “There is only one chair, though.”

“That’s okay,” said the unicorn. “I cannot climb ladders, so I won’t be able to get up to the chair anyway.”

Tomas didn’t wonder how the unicorn knew about the ladder. He was happy to have the unicorn join him on his journey.
They climbed and climbed and climbed – all the way to the top of the mountain.
At the top were a small pond, a few nice bushes, and lots of small white and blue and yellow birds.
There was also a small dragon curled up by the side of the pond.

“Shhh!” said the unicorn, “We don’t want to wake the dragon.”

The two of them sat by the pond, Tomas eating the peanut butter & jelly sandwich and the unicorn eating the apple. They must have fallen asleep, because when they woke up the tiny dragon was sitting in front of them holding a graham cracker in his claws.

“Can I have this?” the dragon asked. “I really like graham crackers and I see you have three of them.”

Tomas rubbed his eyes and nodded.

“Thank you!” said the dragon very excitedly. Tomas expected the dragon to gobble down the graham cracker quickly, but, instead, the dragon took very small bites, enjoying each bite. Tomas and the unicorn quickly finished their graham crackers, long before the dragon was even halfway done.
They then opened up the bag of sunflower seeds and all three of them fed the small white and blue and yellow birds that were happy to have the treats.

Once all the food was gone, the dragon asked them what they were doing on the top of the mountain and Tomas told him they were looking for the chair on the top of the world.

“It’s not up here,” said the tiny dragon.

“Do you know where it is?” asked Tomas.

The dragon shook its head. “Nope, sorry.” Tomas waited for the dragon to say more, but there was nothing more to be said. Dragons are not creatures that take guesses.

From the top of the mountain, Tomas could see his house and, past that, another mountain.

“Maybe the chair is on top of that mountain,” suggested the unicorn. Tomas agreed that this might be the case, so he and the unicorn walked down the mountain.

The dragon, in case you are wondering, did not go with them. The dragon curled up and went back to sleep by the side of the pond.
By the time they got down the mountain, they were very tired.

“How about we go home and climb the other mountain tomorrow?” suggested Tomas to the unicorn. The unicorn nodded, sat down in the grass at the bottom of the mountain, and fell right to sleep.

Tomas went home, ate dinner, and then also fell right to sleep.

The next morning, Tomas found his lunch bag on the table, filled again with a peanut butter & jelly sandwich, a small apple, a bag of sunflower seeds, and three large graham crackers.

He picked up the bag and started on the journey to the top of the other mountain. He did not get far before he noticed that the unicorn was walking beside him.

“This mountain looks taller,” said Tomas hopefully.

“It does,” agreed the unicorn.
The top of this mountain looked exactly the same as the other one: a few nice bushes, lots of small white and blue and yellow birds, and a small dragon curled up by the side of the pond.

“Are you the same dragon?” asked Tomas.

“Nope,” said the dragon. “That was my sister.” And then the dragon sniffed at the paper lunch bag. “I’m glad you brought enough graham crackers for all three of us.”

They ate the lunch and fed the birds.

Once they were done, Tomas asked the new tiny dragon if the chair on the top of the world was on top of this mountain.

“Nope, sorry,” said the dragon. And, like its sister, the dragon said nothing more. Tomas sighed, “I guess I’ll never find the top of the world.”

And then the dragon said something very curious. The dragon said, “The world is a marble.”

Tomas and the unicorn looked at the dragon, expecting that the dragon would say more. But the dragon simply flew over to the pond, curled up, and went back to sleep.
“I guess we need to find a marble,” suggested Tomas to the unicorn.

The unicorn pointed its horn at the bird nest. Inside the nest, along with three tiny white and blue and yellow eggs, was a large marble, the same color as the birds and the eggs.

Tomas took the marble in his hand. It was heavy and cold. He looked into the marble and saw that the white looked like clouds and the blue looked like sky. The yellow looked like the rays of the sun shining through the clouds and sky.

Suddenly, Tomas was very sad.

“Why are you sad?” asked the unicorn.

“I want to sit on the chair on the top of the world,” said Tomas. “And I think the dragon wanted me to look into the marble and imagine I was sitting on top of the world. I do not want to imagine I’m sitting on the top of the world, I want to really find the chair on the top of the world and really sit in it.”
The unicorn looked at the marble and also saw that it looked just like what it’d look like to be sitting on top of the world. You could see the clouds and the sky and the sun streaming through them. It was beautiful, but it was not the chair on the top of the world.

“Then we need to keep looking,” said the unicorn.

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There were no more mountains to climb and they were tired, so they decided to go home. The walk down the mountain was very long and very sad. Just before they got to the bottom, though, something amazing happened: Tomas dropped the marble.

The marble did not roll anywhere special. It did not break open and magically turn into a chair on a ladder. It simply landed right at Tomas’ feet.

Tomas was happy that the marble was not broken, did not roll away, or fall into a hole.

He picked the marble up and looked into it. It was still beautiful, but the view inside was somewhat different than before. He turned the marble a little and looked into it again. Also a beautiful view, also like looking at the world from above, but not exactly the same as before.

★ 10 ★
He turned it around and around and around, and kept looking into the marble, but he could never find the same view as before.

Then, suddenly, Tomas understood what the dragon meant when the dragon said, “The world is a marble.”

“I figured out the riddle!” Tomas yelled with excitement.

The unicorn nodded and, then, pointed his horn towards Tomas’ home.

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When they got home, Tomas’ father was just finishing painting a small wooden chair, which was sitting on top of a ladder. The chair was dark blue with white and yellow moons and stars painted on it.

Tomas ran over to his Dad and gave him a big hug.

“Do you like it?” asked his Father.

“It’s almost perfect,” said Tomas.
“Almost?” asked his Dad.

“Can you paint a unicorn on it too, please? And a tiny dragon?”

“How about a few white and blue and yellow birds, as well?”

Tomas nodded.

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**When the paint was dry**, Tomas climbed the ladder and sat down in the chair.

It was, in fact, the chair on the top of the world.

✮ The End ✮
The Epilogue

On top of the first mountain, Sarah handed the first tiny dragon a graham cracker.

“Why didn’t you tell Tomas about the marble? Why did you make him climb the second mountain?”

The dragon nibbled at the graham cracker in silence and then, finally, said, “Ask me a better question.”

Sarah laughed. “Like what?”

The first dragon took another nibble of the graham cracker, then said, “Like where you can find the garden where the most beautiful flowers grow.”

Sarah laughed again. “OK. Where can I find the garden where the most beautiful flowers grow?”

The dragon took a long time finishing the graham cracker and, finally, said. “I couldn’t guess. Why don’t you ask my brother on top of the other mountain?”

Sarah’s laugh was so loud and so sparkly that diamonds appeared in the air and fell to the ground at her feet. “And I suppose I should bring him a graham cracker when I ask?”

The tiny sister dragon winked. “That would be nice.”

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The mommy dragon was lying in her cave with her two baby dragons. Off in the distance were two tall mountains.

The two baby dragons said they were going to fly to the top of those two mountains so they could be on top of the world.

The sister dragon said the left mountain looked a little taller, so that mountain was the top of the world. The brother dragon said the right mountain looked a little bit taller, so that mountain was the real top of the world.

The mommy dragon smiled and handed each of them a large marble for their travels. She said, “The world is like a marble.”

They had no idea what she meant, but they took their marbles and flew to the top of their mountains.

While both mountains were beautiful and both dragons soon made friends with the white and blue and yellow birds – as well as all the people who brought them graham crackers – they soon understood what she meant.

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No matter which way they turned the marble, they were always looking down from the top. In other words, no matter where they were, they were always on the very top of the world. They did not need to fly to the top of a mountain to be on the top of the world.

That being said, it’s nice to be at the top of a mountain with white and blue and yellow birds, and people who bring you graham crackers, which is why they both stayed up there.

And, since I am sure you are curious, both of the mountains are the exact same height.

And, since I do not want you to be sad, both dragons fly down the mountain to visit the mommy dragon every morning.

That’s why they are always so sleepy in the afternoons.

★ Now, Really, The End ★