



Hold Your Head Up High (Never Let Them See You Cry)

Les Schtroumpfs | The Smurfs · Not Rated · 2774 words

by Arukir

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After getting kicked out of the village for the millionth time, Brainy finds a Smurf crying alone in the forest. When the last Smurf he ever expected to shares more in common with him than he'd like to admit, will Brainy be able to put old grievances aside to help a fellow Smurf?

Edit: Now includes fanart!

I call the Smurf village Blossom Village.

Only 73 more fics until I reach my goal of 200!

Edited on 23 January, 2025; I realized that this fic was swinging wildly between present and past tense, so I (mostly) fixed it.

I know the ending's a little weak, but I didn't want to make this too long. I hope I kept them in-character.

Comments are better than kudos, and I love knowing what you think! Concerns, compliments, criticisms, random thoughts you haven't had an opportunity to get out? Please comment! ☺

"Shut up, Brainy!" The familiar cry came. Brainy flinched, mouth quickly clicking shut more out of instinct than any desire to obey.

Not quickly enough, as he's soon flying through the air. Who did it this time? Gutsy? Boxer? Even he doesn't really know, there were a lot of Smurfs around at the time. It wasn't that hard a hit, so maybe it was Grouchy.

He lands hard on his head, sparking a headache he knows will probably last the rest of the day. He falls over with a groan, thinking he should get up, dust himself off, and stroll into the village with his head held high. As if nothing ever happened. Just like every other time.

Yeah, he should get to that. Right after a little rest. His eyes are closed, so he tries to guess where he landed by feel alone. It's a game he plays sometimes, so he doesn't think about other things. Things like angry Smurfs and heavy mallets.

There's grass under him, but it's thin. There's mud, as well, and he's probably filthy at this point. He hopes there's no rips in his clothes, Tailor wouldn't like him bringing in a ruined outfit *again*. Maybe he should just teach himself to sew, avoid it altogether? He could probably do it better than Tailor anyways, if he can manage to do it without stabbing his fingers with the needle.

He moves his arms around, focusing on the new sensations instead of, well... One of his hands touches water, and he grins. The river! He's somewhere by the river. Based on the trajectory, probably between the third and fourth bend. It's not that big of an achievement, but he can't help the thrill that goes through him when he opens his eyes to discover that he was *right*. He can get some things right, at least.

"Once again, I smurf myself to posses the smurfiest mind in Blossom!" He declares proudly to nosmurf in particular, standing up and dusting himself off. He continues to speak as he fixes his twisted glasses and straightens his hat, the sound of his own voice soothing. "All those Smurfs will regret it once they realize that. One day, they'll be smurfing to apologize to me! And I'll accept it, of course, like any good leader would. Like Papa Smurf always says, 'a smurf smurf always smurfs his smurfs'! When they all smurf my wisdom and respect me, I'll smurf us into a golden smurf! No more smurfing off—"

His rant is cut short by a strange sound. He pauses, tilting his head to try to hear it again. It's coming from upstream, a bit into the forest. He bites his lip, wondering whether he should get Papa Smurf or just ignore it or...

He slowly makes his way towards the sound, knowing it might not be the best idea. But it almost sounds like somesmurf's crying, and Papa Smurf would never ignore somesmurf who was upset! Not like he ignores Brainy's complaints.

Brainy always tries to be a good leader and do what Papa Smurf would do in any situation — so he has to go ahead and find this mysterious Smurf, and tell them off for crying alone in the woods instead of talking to somesmurf. Papa Smurf has rules against hiding when you're upset, after all. Communication is one of the most important things for a productive community, so if somesmurf isn't communicating who knows what it could lead to? All Smurfs must encourage communication at all times!

Stop talking, Brainy, *nosmurf* wants to hear it! His mind supplies, unbidden. But that's hardly the same thing, they'd listen to him if he was *crying*, he's sure of it. Not that he

knows from experience, of course, as he hasn't had a reason to cry in front of anysmurf else since he was a Smurfling. When he learned the phrase 'Never let them see you cry'.

He's barely under the shade of the forest canopy when he spots a Smurf sitting by the river, legs drawn up and hat pulled over half his face, sniffing as he plays with a pebble. It takes a second for Brainy to recognize the gloomy Smurf, but he soon makes out the slight build he's much too familiar with, frown a bit too wide in the same way his grin usually is.

"Jokey?" He asks, incredulous, making the other startle. Jokey reaches a hand up to his hat, keeping it in place over the left side of his face, one eye covered. He looks frightened, like a startled mouse, completely unlike the confident and careless prankster Brainy has the misfortune of knowing. "What are you smurfing out here in the woods? You know Papa Smurf doesn't like us smurfing away by ourselves."

"Gee, then what are you doing out here, Brainy?" Jokey asks in his squeaky, too-loud voice. He giggles, but it sounds off, almost strained. "Tell ya what, you keep your smurf shut, and I'll do the same!"

Brainy pauses, his desire to make sure nosmurf broke the rules battling with his fear of getting in trouble. He sits down next to Jokey, sighing. "Fine, I won't smurf to Papa, this time. I still want to know what you're doing, though. I didn't think you were an outdoorsy Smurf."

"I'm not." Jokey giggles again, this time more genuinely, nearly dislodging his hat from where it blocks his face. Brainy catches a brief moment of panic on his features, which takes him completely by surprise — when was the last time he saw anything short of Gargamel panic Jokey? Before he can really think about it, Jokey continues. "I just come out here sometimes when I wanna think up new ideas for jokes! By myself. Alone."

"Subtlety is a virtue, according to Papa." Not that Brainy is particularly shocked by a lack of it from the Smurf known for giving out exploding gift boxes. "And lying is against the rules, Jokey! Now tell me why you're crying or I'll smurf straight to Papa, I don't care if I'll get in trouble."

He means it. He doesn't particularly like Jokey, in fact he'd even go so far as to say he actively dislikes him, but he doesn't like the idea of something bringing the fun-loving Smurf to tears either. There are a million quotes he can think of from Papa about caring for your fellow Smurf, how they're all a community, how you never leave a Smurf behind — but the voice in his head stopping him from going back to his Mushroom and forgetting about this isn't Papa's.

I want to be alone.

Gosh, then *ah* guess *ah*'ll be alone with ya.

"...somesmurf didn't like my prank, so they... *got me back*. It's nothing, I'm overreacting." Jokey says with a flat voice, staring into the water.

"Of course they didn't smurf your pranks; nosmurf ever does!" Brainy scoffs. Who in their right mind wouldn't dislike being *blown up*? Even if he'd done something different than his usual gift box prank, it was bound to be unpleasant for whoever Jokey's target was. The fact that he's crying over that fact is the most utterly insane thing Brainy's heard in a while. "Maybe you'll finally smurf your lesson, Jokey Smurf. Nosmurf likes being smurfed, after all. It's like I've been smurfing you for years! Quite frankly, I think it's smurfactly fine for somesmurf to get a little revenge after all these smurfs. And if you can't take what you smurf out, well—"

Jokey's entire body tenses. He growls, shouting, "Oh, shut up, Brainy!"

Brainy flinches, going silent as if by switch, arms reaching up to cover his head. It's barely been twenty minutes, it's too soon to go through it again! Oh, why can't he learn to keep his big mouth shut and let other Smurfs mess up? Probably because if he did, everysmurf would slack off and break the rules, and then he'd actually be useless.

But the hit, kick, punch never comes. He is still firmly on solid ground, right next to Jokey. Maybe he had shut up quickly enough for Jokey to not consider the effort of getting up worth it? Or maybe Jokey isn't strong enough to actually throw him? Brainy tries to remember whether he's ever been thrown by Jokey without help of an explosion, but quickly gives up when that brings too many bad memories to the forefront of his mind.

He carefully lowers his arms, not sure if this is a trick, and stares at the prankster. Jokey is looking at the river still, tears streaming down his face, chest heaving. When he speaks, it's with a choked voice.

"You don't needa keep talking, because I already know what you're gonna smurf." The laugh that follows is the most bitter, angry sound Brainy has ever heard from Jokey. "I smurfing deserve it. I'm a crybaby who can't 'take what I smurf out'. But I don't smurfing do smurf like this!"

He yells, ripping off his own hat, turning to lock eyes with Brainy. Brainy gasps, recoiling when he sees the large bruise around Jokey's left eye, a partly-open cut still

dripping blue. There are scratches all over his face and ear. Now that Brainy is looking for it, he can see smaller cuts and faint bruises around Jokey's body, previously hidden by the forest shadows.

"I've smurfed it a thousand times." Jokey continues, not noticing or caring about Brainy's horror. "I deserve every smurf of it because I pranked them first. I deserve it for being *annoying*."

Annoying

"For being the class clown,"

Teacher's pet

"For laughing too loudly,"

Talking too much

"For being a good-for-nothing,"

Arrogant

"Ridiculous,"

Know-it-all

"Bozo!"

Tattletale

Brainy feels like somesmurf punched him in the gut (though even Gutsy can't swing hard enough to hurt like this). For once, he's speechless, because for once... He might actually understand where another Smurf is coming from. But the implications of that don't matter, what matters is—

"Has this happened before?" He asks, quietly yet insistently, trying to sound sympathetic. He isn't good at comforting others, not that he'd ever admit that, but he's seen Clumsy do it enough times to make a decent attempt.

"A few... dozen times." Jokey giggles, and the worst part is that it doesn't even sound fake. He's either somehow amused by this, or better at lying than any Smurf should be. "I mean, a few dozen times per decade, really. I think. I don't remember all of them."

Brainy wishes he could get annoyed by how Jokey can't remember being beat up, as surely that's something one doesn't forget? But he understands, unfortunately, how even that can get old after a while.

"Jokey, you can't just smurf something like this! We have to tell Papa." He pushes down all the feelings that sentence brings up, ignoring them. Despite superficial similarities, his and Jokey's cases are completely different. The other Smurfs hurt Jokey because of who he really is, but they'll leave Brainy alone once they realize that they're wrong about him. They have to be wrong, he has to believe that.

"Why do you even smurf?" Jokey asks, frowning. At least he sounds a little calmer, now. "I thought you'd be happy, knowing I was being 'put in my place'. Can't goof off or mess things up with my jokes if I'm hiding a purple eye, right?"

"Jokey, I..." Brainy breathes, trying to think of what to say. What would Papa do? Papa would never be in this situation, because Jokey would never think he would be happy about something like this. So what can Brainy do? "Jokey, I've never liked you much."

"Gee, great pep talk, Brainiac." Jokey mutters, crossing his arms. He still wasn't wearing his hat.

The sight of a hatless Smurf is just weird, even to another Smurf, so Brainy dusts off the fallen hat and sets it back on Jokey's head a tad too roughly. "Listen, you numbskull, and let me finish smurfing for once."

Maybe Brainy let a bit too much honest emotion into those last words, because Jokey's eyes widen and his mouth stays shut. Brainy internally winces, but continues on anyways.

"I've never smurfed you much," he repeats, "you're a troublemaker, you don't smurf anything seriously, you constantly slack off and smurf the rules. You've pranked me more times than I can remember, and I've lost count of how many evenings I've spent cleaning gunpowder off my smurf."

He pauses briefly to glare at Jokey, who smiles sheepishly.

"I have more reason to hate you than anysmurf in the village." Brainy continues, leaning closer. "You've hidden my glasses, snuck potions into my food, spread rumors about me, hidden my stuff, *smurfed me* to Gargamel in a monkey costume — I don't even

know what else, off the top of my smurf. And you know what I'd do, if I smurfed muscles like Hefty, if I couldn't smurf in trouble for anything?"

They're so close, their noses are almost touching. He sees Jokey gulp in fright, slowly shaking his head. "N-no. But come on, Brainy, haven't I smurfed enough today?"

He actually sounds like he's pleading, like he's scared of Brainy. It's fair, he supposes, since Brainy was scared of Jokey. He wonders which one of them might win in a fight? It isn't like either is particularly strong...

"If I could smurf whatever I wanted to you," Brainy backs up, smiling wickedly, "I'd force you to sit through my lectures on safety and hard work, maybe strand you on smurf of a mushroom. I'd definitely get my revenge for every prank you've ever smurfed against me, but. I. Would. Never. Hurt. You."

He punctuates each word with a poke to Jokey's chest, face hardening. "You're a bully, Jokey Smurf, but even you don't deserve this. And if I smurf that, it must be true."

Jokey stares at him quietly for a moment. Then, without warning, he lunges forward and grips Brainy in a hug. He giggles into Brainy's shoulder. "Who'd ever thunk you'd be a softie, Brainy Smurf?"

"Yes, well, I smurf my moments." Brainy smiles, awkwardly returning the hug. If somesurf had told him that morning that he'd ever react to a hug from Jokey in any way other than pushing him away before the prank could set off, he'd have made them go straight to Mental Smurf. Will wonders never cease? He pulls away, standing up and helping Jokey to do the same, briefly worried by how unstable the other seems on his feet. "Now, smurf those tears and let's go smurf to Papa."

"We can't go right now!" Jokey yells, looking around frantically. It seems he's incapable of doing much in a non-comedic manner, even when upset. He gestures to his bruise. "I can't let anysmurf see me like this."

"How else is Doctor going to smurf a look at you?" Brainy asks, being met with silence. Jokey flicks his gaze downwards, swaying slightly. "Jokey, you weren't seriously going to just smurf in the forest until you smurfed on your own, were you?"

"It's what I've always smurfed before." Jokey mumbles, shrugging. "They already smurf me as an easy target, pranks aside, so why smurf them more reasons to smurf me as weak?"

"Jokey Smurf, you absolute idiot!" Brainy scowls, marching over to him. He wipes the other's tears and physically forces his posture straighter. "Hiding is what makes them smurf you as weak. Raise your smurf up, stroll right back into the village, and let them know what they smurf doesn't bother you."

"But it does bother me."

"Well if you let them smurf that, they win." Brainy grabs his hand, pulling him along half out of fear he'll flee, half out of concern for the way he's still swaying. He hopes the other doesn't have a concussion or something. "Keep your head up high, your smurf straight, and your walk steady. Never let them know they've smurfed to you, and they won't. Not really."

"...great pep talk, Brainiac." Jokey giggles, pulling closer to Brainy. And if he squeezes Brainy's hand a bit tighter every time they come across another Smurf?

Well, Brainy won't mention it. This time.

— end of "Hold Your Head Up High (Never Let Them See You Cry)" —