A Remarkable Mumrik

Set during Comet in Moominland.

On his first adventure, Moomin falls in love at first sight. It's too bad Snufkin just doesn't feel the same.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.

Moomin stared at the mumrik with stars in his eyes. The mumrik sat playing a beautiful song on his harmonica, lit up romantically by the campfire light. His reddish-brown hair was mostly covered by an old, tattered green hat and the rest of his clothes seemed similarly scruffy. His eyes were closed as he played, as though he was completely absorbed in the music.

"What a remarkable creature..." Moomin breathed, dreamily. Moomin had no way of knowing, at this point, whether the mumrik was remarkable or not. However Moomin could see clearly that the mumrik was very handsome and musically talented as well. As far as Moomin was concerned, that was two positive traits he knew before the mumrik even spoke.
Sniff and Little My glanced at each other. Little My scoffed and rolled her eyes. "I want to know if he has any food." She said, walking forwards. "Hey! Hello! I'm Little My. Do you have any food?"

The mumrik tucked his harmonica back into his coat pocket. Moomin noticed that he had black paws with sharp, hooked claws. "I'm sure I have enough soup to share. Do you have any coffee?"

Moomin admired his smooth, deep voice. The mumrik spoke slowly and purposely, as though he knew exactly where each word would go and when he wanted to say it. "Yes! We have some coffee, here in my backpack!" Sniff took off his backpack and sat down next to the campfire to take out the coffee and offer it to the mumrik. Moomin wished he was carrying the coffee.

"It's good to meet fellow travellers. I'm Snufkin."
"I'm Sniff."
"My name is Moomin."
"I'm Little My!"

Snufkin shook paws with each of them as they introduced themselves. Snufkin's deep brown eyes met Moomin's and Moomin's heart skipped a beat as they shook hands. Moomin blushed at the contact.

Little My acted out a dramatic scene behind Snufkin's back, making kissing faces and staggering around pretending to be a swooning damsel. Moomin blushed hotter and thanked the Protector-Of-All-Small-Creatures that Little My didn't feel like embarrassing him in front of the mumrik instead of behind him.

"What brings you to the lonely mountains?" Snufkin asked them, not five minutes later as they all sat around the camp fire.
"We're searching for the observatory." Moomin told him. "We're trying to find out about the catastrophic event our friend the Muskrat was talking about."
"Ah, yes, I've also heard rumours of a comet."
"A comet!?!" They chorused.

Snufkin sipped his coffee as the three friends stared at him. Then he told them what he knew. "Its a star with a tail. It travels through the sky, wherever it pleases while the rest of the stars stay in their place."

He seemed wistful, as he stared up at the sky as he spoke. Moomin noticed that the night sky was reflected clearly in Snufkin's eyes. Moomin leaned forward and propped his head up on his hands, as he admired the mumrik in front of him.
"We're going to the observatory to find out where it's going!" Little My informed Snufkin importantly.

"Ah, how exciting. A comet could hit anywhere at all, even here."

"Here!?" Sniff squeaked out. "It mustn't hit me!"

"Comets will hit wherever they please. If it's heading here, then here is where it will hit." Snufkin sipped his coffee casually, as the other three stared at him in horror (and admiration as the case may be). "May I accompany you to the observatory? I do love the stars."

"Of course you should come!" Moomin cheered. "Say... Why do you know so much more about the comet than the Muskrat?"

"Well... he lives in a hole. And I travel around and talk to many different people."

Snufkin smiled softly. What a beautiful sight, Moomin thought. "You all should spend the night in my tent. The comet isn't close just yet."

Moomin lay next to Snufkin, staring at the inside of the tent with wide eyes. When they'd accepted Snufkin's invitation, It hadn't occurred to Moomin that they'd be sleeping next to each other. Moomin's whole body was trembling nervously at the thought of spending the night with Snufkin. He willed it to stop moving but was unsuccessful.

"Are you cold?" Snufkin blinked sleepily at him.

"N-no! I'm okay." Moomin blushed, embarrassed at being caught nervous.

Snufkin didn't push further, but instead stretched his own blanket so it also covered Moomin. Moomin squeaked as the blanket was pulled up to his snout, effectively tucking him into bed. Moomin watched as Snufkin put his hat over his face and lay on his back with his head on his hands. It was unfortunate that the hat covered up Snufkin's handsome face, but at least it allowed Moomin to admire him without being caught. Snufkin's hair curled around his ears and stuck out where he was lying on it. His ears were on the side of his head and slightly pointed at the top, which might not mean much to you and me but we must remember that Moomin's ears resided on the top of his head.

Moomin wondered how he was supposed to sleep soundly next to such an angelic creature. Snufkin had shared his dinner with three unplanned guests and then also offered his tent for a rest and his time and effort to guide them where they needed to go. Moomin was sure he'd never met anyone more helpful or knowledgeable than Snufkin. He blushed and buried his snout into the blanket. Then he realised he had made a mistake - the blanket smelled just like Snufkin. A little like coffee, a a little like the forest and somehow, inexplicably, a lot like the strong salty open sea air.

Snufkin's paw reached up to his hat and Moomin remembered that he was still shaking. Snufkin was awake! Moomin quickly closed his eyes and pretended to sleep, clutching the blanket close to his chest. Snufkin didn't notice he was still awake, or didn't say anything if he did.
Oh please, Moomin thought, oh please don't let him realise I'm really awake. And if he does, let him think I'm simply uncomfortable sleeping in a tent, and don't let him know that I'm trying to stop myself from reaching out and playing with his hair. Snufkin continued to not say anything. Moomin risked a glance up and found that Snufkin had placed his hat back on his face. What a relief! He was probably just adjusting it to be more comfortable and Moomin was just panicking for no reason. How silly of him! He'd laugh at himself, only he didn't want to wake any of the others up.

Moomin snuggled up under the blanket and let himself be delighted by the overwhelming scent of the sea.

Moomin flung himself into the fray before he realised perhaps it wasn't the best idea. He didn't have any weapons to help fight off the giant, carnivorous plant and he certainly couldn't count on Sniff for backup.
"Moomin!" A voice called out from behind him, and a small object was tossed towards him which he caught. A knife! Moomin just about caught it without dropping it and hoped that Snufkin, or any of the others, hadn't noticed him fumble. Moomin flipped the knife open, thankful to have a weapon and began battling back the plant. Snufkin had given him his knife to fight off the plant - now he really must win the fight. Not that he didn't have to before.

Now he knew for certain that Snufkin was watching him and had given him a weapon, which meant he believed Moomin could win. Moomin used the knife to slice off some of the plants flowers, which gave it less mouths to attack with. I'm too overwhelmed... I might die here...right in front of all my friends... Moomin thought to himself. How dreadful!

Before he could resign himself to his terrible fate, Snufkin's voice boomed across the fight once again. The carnivorous plant started to retreat, relieving Moomin of several attackers. He breathed a sigh of relief before he realised that the plant was now heading towards Snufkin.

Snufkin stepped in front of Snork as the plant lunged at them, but Moomin didn't have a chance to admire his bravery, as he leapt forward to cut at the vine aiming at his new friend.

Moomin's heart skipped a beat when Snufkin smiled at him in thanks, but he ignored the feeling as they, as a group, beat back the bush until eventually it was defeated. Moomin blushed, delighted, as Snorkmaiden took his hands and thanked him profusely. He denied his bravery, humbly, and tried to seem very chivalrous, like a fairytale prince in the stories Moominmamma read him. Still, he hoped that Snufkin was impressed with his heroism.
But when he turned to look, Snufkin wasn't paying any attention and was instead talking to Snork, as Little My and Sniff argued. Snufkin and Snork were saying how nice it was to see each other again. So, these were Snufkin's friends before Moomintroll met him. He couldn't help but feel a little jealous that they'd had who knows how much longer to get to know Snufkin and Moomin had only had a few days.

The feeling of jealousy was only made more intense when Snorkmaiden kissed Snufkin. Moomin couldn't help but frown at the sight and the feeling of a deep pit formed in his stomach which he tried to ignore. It was no good getting jealous of the Snorkmaiden, especially over his new, platonic friend that he most definitely did not have romantic feelings for, thank you very much, Little My. Or maybe he did. But only a little one! And certainly not something to ruin a new potential friendship over!

Moomin accidentally caught Snufkin's eye as the mumrik was kissed and hugged. That was a mistake. Snufkin looked too pleased for Moomins liking, blushing lightly at Snorkmaiden's kiss. Were they together? Was Snorkmaiden Snufkin's girlfriend? Snufkin was taken? And maybe also didn't like boys? Or were they just very close friends? Moomin had no way of asking without looking strange. Did all of Snufkin's friends get to kiss him? Did Moomin get to kiss him? Would it be weird if Moomin kissed him now?

It would probably be weird. But Snufkin had saved them by throwing Moomin his only weapon and then distracting the carnivorous plant anyway. Surely that was enough of an excuse to kiss his hero? But Snorkmaiden had already taken care of it, lavishing praise and affection on both Snufkin and Moomin.

"We'd better get started if we want to get back on time to warn them." Moomin announced before he said anything stupid, with the rest of the group agreeing. Before long, they were headed back down the mountains, on their way to Moomin Valley.

Moomin gazed across the hallway towards where Snufkin sat accompanying the musicians with his harmonica. Snorkmaiden, who he danced with, giggled quietly. "Oh, Moomin, I hope one day I'll meet someone who's as smitten with me as you are with Snufkin."

Moomin almost tripped over his own feet. His ears burned bright red and he glanced nervously back over to where Snufkin was to make sure he wasn't paying attention. To Moomin's relief, the mumrik was entirely focused on his harmonica. His eyes were closed as he played, completely absorbed in the music.

"I don't know what you're talking about." Moomin whispered back to Snorkmaiden, who rolled her eyes.

"Of course you do. Romance is in the nature of moomins and snorks, you know. We all fall in love very easily and then we're committed to that person forever and ever." She sighed.
"I know that. But why do you think I'm in love with Snufkin?"
"Isn't it obvious?"
"No! Please, Snorkmaiden, I'm begging you. Just tell me what gave me away? So I can stop?"
"I don't see why you want to stop. Don't you want to confess to him? What are you going to do for your confession? Oh, I bet it will be romantic - you're so sweet, Moomintroll. Is it going to be big, in front of everybody, so you can declare your love to the world?"
"No!" Moomin yelped.
"Oh, no, of course not, Snufkin is a very private person. I almost forgot!"
"No, Snorkmaiden, I'm not confessing to him!"

She gasped. "Not confessing? But why? Surely you can't mean never? I understand wanting to wait until the right time-"
"I can't, Snorkmaiden, he'd be so unhappy. We were talking last night and-and he told me he'd never had a group of friends on his adventures before, and how much he enjoyed having my friendship! And-and the longer we talked the worse it was! We started talking about the differences between Moomin's and mumriks and I tried to talk to him about it, I really did, but he told me that he'd never get married because he'd never be able to settle down into one place!"
"Couldn't you just travel with him?"
"I asked but he said he prefers to travel alone and that somebody else would just get in the way and need looking after. Besides I could never leave Moominvalley forever."

"Oh, Moomin, I'm so sorry!"
"It's alright, Snorkmaiden. Besides, moomins are just prone to falling in love at first sight. Usually two moomins will fall in love at first sight with each other. It's very rare it's not reciprocated, but sometimes it's not, I suppose. It's almost unheard of for a Moomin to fall in love with someone who's not a Moomin as well! I don't know how mumriks fall in love or even how they court each other! What am I even supposed to say to him? I know we only met a few days ago but I'm so in love with you it's driving me insane to think about being without you?"

"Well, it's a start." Snorkmaiden considered.
"Wha- No! It's not the start of anything! I'm not confessing - he'd probably hate me forever and then leave and never come back!"
"No, he wouldn't! He'd probably say something just as darling and romantic and change his mind about getting married and give you a kiss."

Moomin blushed red at the thought, although there was an underlying sadness that the precious thought would never come to be.

"What if we roleplayed it?" Snorkmaiden drew him out of his self-pitying thoughts, causing Moomin to stumble a little.
"H-huh?"
"You know, what if we roleplayed what would happen if you confessed to Snufkin? Here, say that thing you said earlier about being so in love it drives you crazy, but talk to me like I'm Snufkin."
"O-okay." Moomin cleared his throat. "S-Snufkin. We've known each other only for a few days, and I know this might seem crazy but I'm so in love with you. I'm so in love with you I think I'm going mad from it. I've never met anyone like you before and I don't think I ever will again. I admire you so much. You're so brave and clever and y-you're beautiful. I love you."

Snorkmaiden's eyes welled up with tears. "That was so beautiful, Moomin." She cried as she flung her arms around his neck and whispered in his ear. "There's no way he could resist such a romantic speech. And don't look now, but Snufkin's looking your way!"

Moomin looked over at Snufkin, despite instructions not to. Oops. The mumrik was staring at them with a curious expression and Moomin noticed they'd been dancing closer to the musicians than when they started. Oh dear, he hoped Snufkin hadn't heard any of his embarrassing confession. That would be just awful. But just as he was about to panic, Snufkin gave a small smile and a wave. Moomin beamed and waved enthusiastically back.

Snufkin was his best friend and he couldn't bring himself to ruin it. Moomin highly doubted Snufkin would react like Snorkmaiden did. If Snufkin knew how he felt, he probably wouldn't want to be friends any more, let alone best friends.

"If you don't tell him, I will." Little My snapped at Moomin the next day. Moomin slapped his paw over her mouth to stop her shouting, which was a miscalculation on his part. He felt sharp fangs digging into his flesh and yelped, yanking his hand away and shaking it as though to stop the pain. "I don't know what you're talking about." He tried next. The tactic hadn't worked on Snorkmaiden yesterday and would never work on Little My. Moomin wasn't sure why he bothered trying it.

"If you don't tell Snufkin that you're in love with him, then I will."
"But why? It's not affecting you, is it?"
"It is! You're no fun any more! All you do is gaze longingly at Snufkin and sigh like you're in some sort of romance novel. Who cares if Snufkin doesn't fall in love at first sight? Just court him, like those dumb books you're acting like!" Little My scoffed and ran off to jump up for a ride on the brim of Snufkin's hat.

Moomin stared after her with wide eyes. Courting?

Here was the problem; Moomin didn't know how to court a mumrik.

Courting moomins was easy you either give them a flower or a favour and came away with a
relationship or a new friend, but Moomin didn't know how to court Snufkin. What if he insulted him accidentally? Mumriks were independent creatures, free spirited and preferring to be alone. And Snufkin was an adventurer! He wouldn't have time to deal with Moomin and his feelings. He had much more important stuff to be doing! Travelling far and wide and going on adventures and meeting interesting people!

Oh no, Snufkin would be meeting interesting people! Snufkin probably already knew so many interesting people and obviously some of them would be interested in him romantically. How could they not be? Snufkin was clever and quick-witted and so funny. Handsome too. He probably attracted so many people. Wonderful, beautiful people who would adore him and shower him with gifts and take care of him.

Moomin walked along with the others in silence. Nobody was talking, so it wouldn't be too suspicious if his own mind wandered off. He tried to picture Snufkin's person in his mind. They would be a girl, he decided, with a beautiful face and long, blonde hair. She would be kind because Snufkin doesn't like people who are cruel. And she would live in a castle or a mansion - somewhere huge and impressive with soft beds that Snufkin could sleep in when he tired of the hard ground outside. She would be rich enough to give Snufkin whatever his heart desired and she would be a good cook, so she could feed him whatever he wanted as well.

Moomin shook his head. Snufkin would hate all of that! He loved living in his tent and he didn't like carrying more than he needed and he could cook his own meals. But it would be nice to cook something for Snufkin. Unfortunately Moomin had no idea how to cook.

He smiled at the thought of living in a little cottage, just him and Snufkin, and cooking the mumrik pancakes whenever he wanted them. Moomin sighed dreamily. They could have sleepovers every night where Snufkin told Moomin his stories and then in the morning Moomin could make breakfast for them as Snufkin snoozed peacefully upstairs. He could bring Snufkin breakfast in bed. Would Snufkin like that? He wasn't sure, but Moomin was certain that he, himself, would love to be able to dote on him. Not that Snufkin needed looking after! He was just so cool and put-together. It seemed like he was taking care of all of them, especially taking care of Moomin. Moomin wanted to be the one taking care of Snufkin for once. He didn't want to be a dead-weight. He wanted to prove to Snufkin that he was useful and an adventurer, just like him. If there happened to be some romantic undertones to the 'looking after' situations, well, Moomin couldn't help that, could he?

No, Snufkin certainly didn't need looking after like that but perhaps, sometimes, on his travels he did need rescuing? A worrying scene sprung to mind - of Snufkin in danger from some huge, terrifying beast. A dragon! Snufkin falls to the ground and brings his arms up to cover his head, but just as the dragon is about to strike, a knight in gleaming armour rides in and swoops Snufkin onto the back of his white horse!

Then later, when the knight takes off his helmet, it reveals another mumrik who was also very
handsome. Then Snufkin gives him a kiss in thanks for his hero. It turns out that the knight also loves travelling and they go around the whole world together, having adventures and saving people and the knight gets to kiss Snufkin whenever he wants.

Moomin scowled at the thought. Snufkin didn't even like hugging, stupid knight, why would he be okay with kissing? If Snufkin was going to be okay with anyone kissing anyone, it surely should be his best friend. Not that Snufkin had to kiss anyone if he didn't want to!

Moomin felt his face heating up as he imagined Snufkin leaning in with heavy-lidded eyes to press his nose against Moomin's snout. He sighed. That was what Snorkmaiden was convinced would happen once Moomin confessed to him, but Moomin was sure of the opposite.

Moomin was motivated only by Snorkmaiden's encouragement and Little Mum's threats to confess his feelings to Snufkin. Inevitably Snufkin would reject him and inform him of some wonderful, attractive lover he already had, and that he didn't need any more of them. Then he'd tell Moomin he was silly for believing he was even worth looking at as a friend, let alone a romantic partner. Then Moomin would probably cry and Snufkin would think he was even more pathetic than he already thought.

Moomin pinched himself. Don't be such a silly Moomintroll. Snufkin isn't like that at all. Even though he didn't feel the same way as Moomin did, he'd probably appreciate knowing how Moomin felt, even if it was so he could avoid him forever. Snufkin would never be so mean as to tell anyone they were worthless or unwanted. But the part Moomin imagined where Snufkin already has a romantic partner, he was absolutely certain that couldn't be wrong.

Or maybe it was? Oh, Moomin was so confused he couldn't think properly. Snufkin was so distant and mysterious - perhaps he was above having any relationships at all. Snufkin could certainly take care of himself and he needed no princess nor knight nor Moomin to do so for him. Still, Moomin thought dreamily, it would be wonderful if he could take care of Snufkin just for a little while.

As Snufkin dropped to his knees and wept, Moomin regretted his wish to be able to take care of the mumrik. He had been hoping to tuck Snufkin into bed and bring him medicine for a mild cold! Or even catching him as he tripped and getting to hold him for a few seconds which was almost the same as a hug! Or perhaps swooping in and saving his life from some monster as the knight in his daydream did, before Snufkin got hurt at all.

Not like this. He didn't want it to happen like this. Snufkin wasn't sick, or hurt, or in danger. He was simply heart broken.
"No! No! She's gone! My beautiful sea! No more stars reflected on her black surface, no more diving, no more deep sea fishing, no more sailing! She's gone! Gone! All gone!" Snufkin sobbed, as the rest of their friends watched on in horror and sympathy.

Snufkin leant forwards and buried his face into his knees, clutching his hat with his paws. Moomin gently placed his own paw on Snufkin's shoulder in the hope of comforting his friend.

"But Snufkin, you're always so happy-go-lucky." Moomin tried, hoping to spark something. He wasn't sure what. He hoped Snufkin would say "You're absolutely right, Moomin." And jump up and play a fun little ditty on his harmonica as they skipped the rest of the way home. Moomin put his paw on Snufkin's shoulder.

Instead, Snufkin stared folornly at the canyon where the sea used to be and said "I know... But I've always loved the sea more than anything..."

Oh, why did Moomin have to say that?

Snufkin held Moomin's paw in place, so at least he knew he was wanted in his friend's time of need. Moomin almost strangled Snork when he interrupted the quiet, contemplative silence. However it seemed to be what Snufkin needed to shock him into moving again. He stood up wiped his face and let his paw slip into Moomin's. Moomin could feel his ears burning.

Their party of explorers walked on. Moomin could see that Snufkin's eyes were still filled with tears and he was still shaking. He reached over and took Snufkin's paw in both of his and gently squashed it between them. Snufkin turned to face him and Moomin gave him a soft smile, which he hoped would reassure him.

Snufkin stared at him, stricken. Then a strange look passed over his face. "We need to cross the ocean to get to Moomin Valley."
"Yes? Oh! But how? It's all dried up!"
"We can't use a ship! We're stuck." Snork said.
"What?"
"Stuck?"
"No, no! We can't be stuck!"
The group erupted into terrified denials and upset protests.
"We're not stuck." Snufkin's calm, clear voice cut through the chaos.
"What are you talking about? Look at it, we can't walk across!" Little My yelled at him.
Snufkin's eyes were clear again and his expression much more hopeful than just moments ago.
"That's exactly what we're going to do. We're going to walk across the ocean."
"You've gone crazy!" Little My shouted. "Didn't you hear me? We can't walk across that!"
"She's right, you know." Snorkmaiden agreed.

"Oh we won't be walking across on foot." Snufkin informed them. "We'll be walking across on stilts!"
"Stilts?" Moomin asked.
"Yes, that's how I got around when I went to a land once that was completely covered in lava. I couldn't walk on the floor of course, because of the lava, so instead I got around on stilts. They're much faster than walking on land."
"But we don't have any stilts." Moomin protested. Little My was right, unfortunately. His dear best friend had been driven mad by the lack of the sea.

"We can make some!" Snufkin said.
"I agree." Snork said. "There's plenty of trees we can take branches from and make stilts. It shouldn't be too hard."
"Really? Oh, wonderful!" Snorkmaiden smiled and clapped her hands together.
"But..." Sniff interrupted. "I don't know how to walk on stilts..."
"O-oh...me neither." Moomin agreed, sadly. So did the rest of them.

Snufkin waved them off. "I'll teach you, once we make them. It's not difficult when you get the hang of it. You can practice before we set out."

And so it was decided. Snufkin looked pleased with himself, which is all Moomin could ask for.

After just an hour of practice, Snufkin pronounced them ready to walk across the ocean. They were apprehensive, but willing and so they set off across the dry land where the sea used to be.

Moominmamma looked around at her family and Moomin's friends, all sat in the cave near the beach. One of Moomin's new friends, Snufkin, was smearing some sort of ointment onto one of Moominmamma's blankets.

"What is that, dear?" Moominmamma asked.
"It's sun oil, Moominmamma." Snufkin replied. "I was given it as a gift when I was in a land covered in lava to use as protection against the heat. There's only a drop left."
"Shouldn't you be putting that on yourself then?"
Snufkin looked as though she had just murdered his own mother right in front of him. "No, I'm putting this on this blanket and then we can cover the cave entrance with it so we're all protected."

Moominmamma was impressed, although a little confused about how hurt he seemed. "Are you sure, dear?"
It was always best to check these things. Children should take care of themselves first, wherever possible.
"Yes, of course."
Her Moomin had found such kind, generous friends on his adventure. Moominmamma was certain they were all doomed, but she was glad the children had found each other before they died.

Moominmamma sat next to Moominpappa and held his hand as they watched their children.

Sniff and Little My weren't fighting, like they usually were. Instead they were quiet and contemplative, staring anxiously at the entrance to the cave.

Snorkmaiden clung to her brother and spoke quietly with him as he scribbled into a little notebook. She chided him for it, telling him it was far too late to bother with learning about the comet now.

Snufkin seemed to be the calmest person in the cave, as he methodically spread the sun oil over the blanket. He hummed a little under his breath as he worked, as though it were just another day and their doom wasn't imminent. Moominmamma almost felt reassured at how relaxed he was.

Moomin shuffled closer to Snufkin and pressed their shoulders together. Wordlessly, he poured out some sun oil and began to help spread it on the blanket. Snufkin smiled gently at him and Moomin smiled back, bashfully.

Oh my, oh my, Moomin hadn't told her about that when he came home and babbled about their adventure. She watched as the two boys gravitated so strongly towards each other that their sides were pressed completely together, with their heads tilting towards the other.

She kept watching as they worked together, perfectly in sync, to hang the blanket up at the entrance of the cave. She watched as Moomin timidly took Snufkin's paw and watched for his reaction.
She watched as Moomin tugged Snufkin behind him, into a more private part of the cave - a little section hidden away. Secret. Moominmamma knew without asking what Moomin was going to say. Her little boy was all grown up and ready to confess his love! Oh, she hoped it would go well, if only for them to be able to grasp a few hours of happiness before the comet hit.

"You can do this, Moomin!" Snorkmaiden enthused quietly. "Just go over there and tell him how you feel!"

Moomin gave her a frightened look.
"Don't be such a big baby!" Little My snapped. "We're all going to be in pieces tomorrow morning and you'll be the most pathetic pieces since you can't even work up the nerve to talk to your 'best friend'!"
"I can talk to him." Moomin protested. "I-I simply don't know what I'm going to say just yet."
"Moomin's right. He shouldn't do it yet."
"Shut up, Sniff! He should do it right now. There's no reason to wait. He's just being a coward."
"Why do you think he should wait, Sniff?"
"You can't tell someone you love them without giving them a gift! It should be a jewel- a diamond-the bigger the better!"
"Diamonds are for marriage proposals you idiot!"

Moomin paled. He was supposed to get Snufkin a gift as well? In such a short amount of time! He didn't know what Snufkin liked well enough to get him a gift! In fact, he was certain Snufkin didn't like much of anything at all. He only bothered to keep the bare essentials while traveling and got rid of everything else.

"Snufkin doesn't need a gift, Moomin." Snorkmaiden assured him. "And he doesn't need a confession immediately."
"What? Yes he does."
"-although you should certainly do it tonight. But he could probably use some company."

Moomin turned to look at Snufkin, as he rubbed sun oil onto a blanket. Moominmamma had moved away from him and took a seat next to Moominpappa, so now Snufkin was entirely alone. Without meaning to, Moomin found his feet walking over to him.

He knelt down next to Snufkin and started to help smother the blanket. Moomin pressed his side up against Snufkin's and delighted in the feeling of being close with his best friend.

He was certain that Snufkin would tell him not to sit so close or that he would simply lean away. Instead Snufkin offered him an adorable smile. Moomin couldn't help but stare at him in awe, if only for a few seconds before he managed to force a smile back.
They hung up the blanket and Moomin took a deep, fortifying breath before he took Snufkin's paw in his. Snufkin didn't break away from that either. Instead he looked curiously down at where they were holding each other and then looked back to Moomin's face, with fluttering eyelashes. His long lashes cast shadows under his eyes. Moomin wondered why he'd never noticed it before.

Then he remembered he was supposed to be talking. He couldn't just hold Snufkin's paw and then not say anything! Snufkin was still watching him. He probably thought he was weird and didn't actually want to hold his paw and was just too polite to say anything. He probably didn't even want to be friends and was just putting up with being annoyed by Moomin for now. He was just there to weather out the comet and then he'd leave forever and Moomin would never see him again.

Trying to ignore his own paranoia, Moomin pulled gently on Snufkin's paw to lead him away from the others. Snufkin simply let him. The small part of the cave forced them to stand close together, but Moomin thought Snufkin would appreciate that this conversation didn't happen in front of all their friends. Moomin also didn't want to be in front of all their when he cried from rejection.

Moomin took both Snufkin's paws in his own and took a deep breath in. Then he began to speak, staring down at the floor. He couldn't bring himself to look into Snufkin's eyes.

"When I first saw you, I thought you were the most remarkable creature I'd ever seen. I was right. You sat there, lit up by your campfire and played the most beautiful music I've ever heard. And it suited you because you're the most beautiful person I ever met."

"You're so clever too. You always seem to know what to do. You've always got a plan. You barely own anything but somehow you're still generous with it and you're brave too. Snufkin, you're incredible. If the comet kills me tomorrow and leaves you alive, I'd be happy in the afterlife just knowing you're safe."

"Snufkin, I'm sorry for asking this but if I can have just one kiss from you tonight then I'll die happy in the morning. I'm in love with you and I have been since the moment I saw you."

Moomin couldn't look at Snufkin as he spoke. He was far too terrified of his friend's reaction. Snufkin wasn't the kind of person to react badly to things, but he was mostly averse to talking about feelings. Moomin hoped Snufkin didn't think he was expecting anything from him. Despite this, a request for a kiss blurted out from Moomin's mouth against his will. No! He didn't want to ask Snufkin for things he might feel obligated to give!
"I'm in love with you and I have been since the moment I first saw you!" Moomin finished his speech and finally managed to look at Snufkin. Snufkin didn't give much away in his expression usually, so when he squinted his eyes happily and smiled Moomin's heart pounded hard against his chest.

Moomin's ears twitched as he strained to hear the quiet rumbling noise coming from Snufkin's throat. Was...was he...purring? Moomin almost asked, but was caught off guard when Snufkin gently cupped his face with his paws. Moomin gasped and blushed.

He held perfectly still as Snufkin leaned in and placed the softest kiss on Moomin's snout. Moomin felt his knees weaken then give out from underneath him. Snufkin, who hadn't let go of his face was pulled down to the floor with him. The two of them lay next to each other and giggled.

Moomin stared at Snufkin's laughing face and felt like he truly would die happy now he had seen such a beautiful sight. But it seemed Snufkin wasn't ready to go and spend the rest of their time with the others just yet.

Instead, Snufkin took one of Moomin's paws and kissed it, like a proper gentleman. Moomin pressed his other hand against his cheek to try and quash the red rising up.

"Moomin, you're so brave. I've been impressed with how brave you are since you told me you were going on an adventure through the lonely mountains to find the observatory. Then I was even more impressed when you charged in to save Snorkmaiden from that plant. You reminded me of a knight from a fairytale. I've always loved the knights in fairytales the best."

Moomin was thankful that they were already on the floor, as he was beginning to feel very faint.

"You're so sweet and kind, Moomin. The first thought you had when you found out a comet is heading towards us is to race right towards where it was going to hit just to warn your family and friends. Most people would just run in the other direction and keep safe and if you had done that, nobody would have blamed you. But you didn't because you care so much and that has made you brave. You know I don't much like talking about feelings, but I feel you must know that I'm in love with you."

It was official - Moomin really could die happy when the comet hit tomorrow morning. He flung his arms around Snufkin's neck and nuzzled their noses together. Snufkin hugged him back and neither of them let go for quite a long while.
One day Joxter tells them the story of when he fell in love with Mymble at first sight and they think he’s messing with them because it’s far too similar.

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Guess who’s back, back again. No fun this time, just angst, my friends.

Hope you enjoyed it <3

Yes there will be a Snufkin POV for this ;)

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