

# Neighbors

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Severus encounters his new neighbor, who just happens to be a celebrity.

## oneshot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Severus frowned as he looked out the window and saw the woman coming up the walk. He'd been in this new house no more than two days when he'd realized just who his neighbor was.

The doorbell rang. Severus grimaced. Rising from his chair, he stalked to the door. Flinging it open, he set his worst scowl upon his face.

"Yes?" he said in his deepest, most standoffish baritone.

"Mr. Snape?" the tall, leggy woman demanded more than asked.

"Miss Bucket."

"Oh, that's Boo-kay, Mr. Snape." Her bright, blue eyes looked at him seductively.

Severus raised an eyebrow at her.

She extended her hand. Severus looked down at it as if it were Nagini herself. Finally, he extended his hand and tentatively grasped hers. That was all the woman in front of him needed. She grasped his hand tightly and pumped it up and down.

"As I said, I'm Hyacinth Bucket, the host of Keeping Up Appearances, and your new neighbor." She continued to pump his hand up and down maniacally until Severus pulled his hand free. Flexing his hand robotically, he tried to return circulation to it. Realizing it would take a minute, he glared at her accusatorially.

"I wanted to invite you to tea," Bucket gushed.

"Tea?" Severus repeated.

"Yes, tea. It's an afternoon ritual that we Brits enjoy, sometimes with a companion."

Severus frowned. "I know what tea is, Miss *Boo-kay*."

"Ah, good. Then I'll see you at one," she said. Before Severus could decline, the woman had wheeled around and swayed down the sidewalk. Severus stared at her, unable to utter a word as he watched her long, golden hair flow behind her. Her hips swayed attractively, almost as if she knew his eyes were glued to them. Severus swallowed hard, then scowled. What would that vixen want with him? He shook his head. What did he care what she wanted with him? He wouldn't go, and that was that.

One o'clock came and went. An owl tapped at Severus' window. The missive was short and to the point.

*You're late.*

He scowled. He thought not showing up made his statement for him. Not only was she obnoxious, but she obviously wouldn't take no for an answer. Grumbling, he threw his cloak over his shoulders and stalked out his door.

Minutes later he was rapping on his neighbor's door. It swung open of its own accord. Severus poked his head into the home.

"Miss Bucket?"

He was met with silence. Stepping farther into the room, he called her name louder.

"Back here!" he heard from a distant room. Making his way down the hall, he looked into each room which had an open door. She wasn't in any of them. When he reached the end of the hall, the door in front of him was open only a crack. He put his hand on the white wood and pushed the door open an inch.

"Miss Bucket?"

"Come in, Severus."

Severus slowly swung the door open to find an opulent bathroom. In the center of the large room sat a sunken tub big enough for two. The tub was filled with white, frothy bubbles, and Miss Bucket was perched against the side of it with bubbles up to her neck. She gave him a sultry look.

"Well, don't just stand there gaping, come join me," she ordered.

"I... I thought we were meeting for tea?"

Hyacinth reached behind her and lifted her wand from where it lay. With a flick and a swish, a tea set appeared on the edge of the tub next to her.

He gaped at her.

"Miss Bucket, we hardly know each other."

"It's Hyacinth," she directed. "That's not exactly true in any case."

"Miss Bucket... Hyacinth, we have never met. I'm sure I'd remember."

"Perhaps I could jog your memory?" Hyacinth said as she lifted her wand once again. Waving around her head, she transformed in front of him. Hyacinth Bucket was none other than Hermione Granger in full glamour.

"Hermione?"

"See, Severus. I told you we knew each other."

"But... you..." he sputtered.

"The title of my program is Keeping Up Appearances, after all."

"You have a credible job at the Ministry! Why on earth would you pretend to be that brassy woman?"

She shrugged. "I was getting bored with the Ministry. Pushing papers just doesn't do it for me. This adds some excitement to my life without constantly having to be surrounded by danger for a few thrills."

She regarded him thoughtfully. "Really, Severus, Hyacinth isn't that bad, is she?"

He scoffed. "She's insufferable."

Hermione grinned. "Seems like that's a pet name you have for me no matter who I pretend to be."

She rose and got out of the tub. He was relieved yet disappointed to find she was wearing a full bathing suit. The fact that the black suit accented her curves in all the right places, however, was a plus. She sauntered over to him.

"Now," she said in her best Hyacinth Bucket voice. "Are you going to join me, or do I have to use an Imperius on you."

"Miss Granger, control yourself. You wouldn't want to be thrown into Azkaban for using an Unforgivable."

"It's Hermione, and she doesn't live here, so you'd be hard pressed to prove it."

His mouth dropped open. Hermione raised her wand and pointed it at Severus' chest. Something inside him wished she would go ahead and Imperio him. She waved her wand, and he readied himself for the curse, but it never came. His clothing dissolved into a small, form-fitting, black bathing suit. His head shot down, and he glared at his scantily clad body.

"Miss Granger!" he bellowed.

"It was that or the *Imperio*," she explained nonchalantly.

He gazed up at her. "Hermione!"

She turned and swayed back over to the tub. "Get in," she demanded. Turning back to him, she winked. "You know you want to."

Wracking his brain, he could find no argument with her. He indeed wanted to. So, he did.

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*A/N: Prompt by peppermint: Snape's just bought a new house, only he moved in next door to Hyacinth Bucket (that's BOO-KAY) from Keeping Up Appearances. What does he do when Hyacinth asks him round to tea?*

*Also, this includes a little of lynf's prompt: Witch or wizard of choice takes a soak in a luxurious bath to ease away all his/her worries. What worries would s/he rather forget?*