

Keeping Up Appearances with Umbridge

by dracontia

Umbridge is not a Death Eater. Really. This is what happens when you've been watching too much 'Keeping Up Appearances' while reading Potter_Place postings.

one shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I wouldn't take Umbridge or this sorry lot of Death Eaters if you paid me. I just like to jerk them around a bit.

Author's Note:

The following hallucination formed after reading a thread on Potter_Place (topic being characters you hate or find annoying, Spring of 2006) in which it was speculated that Umbridge was a Death Eater. LariLee refuted this speculation, hilariously, with Bellatrix and Snape's highly negative responses to that idea.

This got me to thinking about Highly Annoying People (the capitals seem so appropriate, under the circumstances), which led me to think about Hyacinth Bucket and the horror she inspires in those around here... in short, it led to this little lump of crackfic, the original version of which was posted in response to LariLee's posting. At the risk of sounding like an unsavory individual, put on your Hyacinth-colored glasses, turn your time-turners back to an insanely AU rendition of events that took place 'off screen' during Harry's fifth year, and enjoy!

Malfoy Manor has been commandeered for the latest Death Eater meeting, since even Voldemort finds that the mildewed-wallpaper ambience of the Riddle House has worn thin. Various Death Eaters are lounging around the parlor for a little pre-meeting drink, idly speculating on what it would take to get Lucius (cheap bastard) to break out the good booze. Suddenly, Avery happens to glance out the window.

"Shite! It's that Umbridge bitch!"

Dark-robed figures bolt upright at his shrill warning cry, trading frantic glances like so many meerkats detecting the shadow of a raptor.

"Hide me!" Pettigrew ducks behind Snape. "She'll 'hem, hem' at me, I just know it!"

Severus shakes the whimpering wizard off his robes in disgust. "Honestly, Pettigrew, are you a man or a—oh, right. Crap."

"I'll Crucio that toad-in-a-bow!" Bellatrix snarls as she darts forward, wand in hand, only to be restrained by Rodolphus and Rabastan.

"You know the Dark Lord has forbidden interfering with her—remember?" Rodolphus mutters in what he hopes is a sufficiently soothing tone; with luck, the worst thing that

will happen to him tonight is exile to the couch. Come to think of it, that really would be a good thing—considering Bella.

"Why is that, again?" Crabbe Sr. asks. Goyle Sr. is still blissfully unaware of the situation, though he is beginning to realize that people are looking alarmed.

Snape sighs. Once again, it falls to him to explain, in words of as few syllables as possible, why Umbridge in the Ministry of Magic is a GOOD thing for Death Eaters. "Because she clogs up the works at the Ministry like a dead Hippogriff would clog up a loo. And we don't want her around here because the Dark Lord doesn't like self-important arseholes underfoot."

"Unless they have piles of Galleons," Avery mutters, his eyes flickering towards Lucius. Pettigrew giggles; Snape elbows Avery, who kicks Pettigrew, who hides behind the sofa to cringe and feel sorry for himself in private.

The doorbell rings. Actually, it emits a sort of howl of pain that would give a banshee a run for its money, but that's not at all an unusual response to Umbridge.

"Get rid of her, Lucius!" Bella hisses.

"How? She won't take a bribe. The witch actually thinks she's welcome among us, for crap's sake. The elves can't even get rid of her. She eats house-elves for breakfast, which is completely counterproductive."

"Charm her! Do something to justify your consumption of more than your fair share of oxygen—and hydrogen peroxide bleaching compounds—besides providing a meeting space and second-class alcohol," Severus snaps, completely out of patience.

"She can't be charmed, and I'll have you know **this** is *natural*," Lucius sniffs, tossing his shampoo-advert tresses.

"Bloody hell. STALL her, then, and I'll take care of it," Severus kvetches in exasperation. Lucius strides to the door, remembering just in time to stuff the mask he's holding into an inside pocket of his robes.

"Madame Umbridge, I presume?" Lucius asks in a voice that could freeze magma.

"Ah, I hope I haven't missed anything, have I, Lucius?" Umbridge asks in a sickly sweet tone, as she attempts to barge in.

Lucius dodges left, then right, blocking her from getting through the door. The thought *How dare she call me by my first name?* wars with, *Thank Merlin for all those dancing lessons...*

"I'm sure I don't know what you mean," he counters, executing a particularly athletic move that concludes with the pink-hatted horror stepping painfully on his foot. This only serves to confirm the visual assessment that the witch could, indeed, stand to lose a few stone.

"No need to be coy with me, dear," she says brightly, her falsetto bellow reaching the parlor, where it elicits a collective shudder. "I can always sense when important people are doing important things, and naturally, it's only my duty to contribute. And I'm sure it would give Peter a thrill to see me; I do believe he fancies me more than a bit."

While Lucius is slightly stunned from attempting to parse both the grammar and the implausibility of her words, Umbridge barrels past him with all the grace of a rampaging Erumpent (if rampaging Erumpents wore crocheted pink shawls).

Minutes later, Rabastan hustles an Obliviated Umbridge to the end of the drive so that Voldemort doesn't see her and start hexing people indiscriminately for the affront of being subjected to the witch's appearance. No one who values their arse subjects the Dark Lord to the color pink unless it involves protruding entrails.

"You could have hit ME," Lucius whinges to Severus as they hurry to the ballroom in which the meeting will take place.

Avery mouths 'No great loss' to Rodolphus behind Lucius' back. Rodolphus grimaces in agreement, earning both of them smacks in the head from Bella.

Severus, never missing anything, wonders if there is anywhere on earth he can go to escape The Curse of the Dunderheads.

FIN

Thanks, as usual, to Tempest for the beta. Now I'm going to return to pouting because Patricia Routledge isn't playing Umbridge in movie 5.

For those who actually read the character list--I know, I never mentioned McNair within the context of this story. I'm just assuming that he's there, sweating on a silk sofa and generally smelling up the joint.