

The Metamorph Next Door

*This fic's premise is inspired by the webtoon/pornhwa titled **The Gacha Girl Next Door**/이웃집 가차걸 by **malgwang** and their artist **hip**. Please check them out.*

Story Starts

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Chapter 3

Interlude: From Bookworm to Butterfly

Waifu of the Week: None

AN: We are pushing the plot this time!

"Now, now, now, Ms Greengrass," the ominous voice of Alecto Carrow echoed throughout the Muggle Studies classroom, each word dripping with malicious anticipation. "I am quite busy today, so I shall leave you to discipline our resident Mudblood—it needs to understand its proper place within our newly ordered society."

Hermione didn't dare look up. Her fingers trembled against the cold stone floor where she knelt, the rough texture biting into her palms like tiny teeth. *'This can't be happening,'* she thought desperately, her mind racing through possibilities that grew darker with each passing second. *'This isn't the magical world I dreamed of.'*

She was beginning to regret ever accepting magic into her life—a thought that would have been blasphemous to her younger self. That girl had devoured every magical text she could find, had believed that knowledge and dedication could overcome any obstacle. That girl hadn't yet learned what words like *Mudblood* truly meant when spoken by people with wands and authority.

Minerva McGonagall—Deputy Headmistress at the time—had warned her that unavoidable bigotry existed within certain circles of wizarding society.

Hermione remembered that conversation now with bitter clarity. How naïve she'd been, thinking it would amount to nothing more than snide comments and social exclusion.

But not this. Never this systematic cruelty, this calculated degradation that stripped away dignity one lesson at a time.

She and her family had been planning their escape to Australia once the Dark Lord seized control of the Ministry. But she hadn't taken into account—*'foolishly,'* her mind supplied viciously—that they'd use something as innocuous as the Hogwarts letter as a Portkey.

'How could I have been so stupid? I should have known, should have anticipated—'

The familiar tug behind her navel had transformed from wonder to horror in the space of a heartbeat. One moment, home. The next, here. Her parents had been intercepted by Dumbledore's group before they could be hunted—or so she desperately hoped, clinging to that fragile thread of possibility as the classroom door slammed shut behind Alecto.

"I have to report to our lord," Alecto Carrow announced, her squat figure casting a grotesque shadow across the classroom floor. "I don't want to hear any excuses when I return. I'll be checking your wand and the Mudblood later for proper application of discipline."

With that chilling promise, the Death Eater exited the room, her heavy footsteps echoing down the corridor until both Hermione and Daphne slumped forward in exhausted relief.

"I'm sorry, Hermione," Daphne whispered, kneeling in front of her. The Slytherin's shoulders quivered with suppressed emotion—fear, guilt, or perhaps both. Her voice cracked on the last word, barely audible, as if saying it aloud made the shame real.

Hermione's stomach twisted. Daphne had never looked this small, this broken. The Slytherin girl who had been her secret friend since first year.

"Ahem."

Both girls whipped around. A Gryffindor sat at one of the classroom desks—messy black hair, bright green eyes, legs crossed with an ease that belonged nowhere near this room. He looked as if he'd been there all along.

'Harry?' The thought struck Hermione like a slap. *'Was he always there?'*

He hadn't moved, hadn't spoken until now. Dark circles shadowed his eyes, the kind earned through too many late nights with textbooks. But something about his presence felt *off*—dreamlike, as if he'd been pasted into the scene from somewhere else entirely.

"...!"

Bzzzt. Bzzzt. Bzzzt.

Hermione's eyes fluttered open to twisted bedsheets and crumpled pillowcases bunched around her face, the fabric warm where she'd been breathing into it. Cotton wrinkles pressed into her cheek like an accusation of restless sleep.

Bzzzt. Bzzzt. Bzzzt.

The alarm spell's insistent buzzing cut through the fog, each pulse vibrating through her nightstand. She reached up with a heavy arm, fingers fumbling blindly across the wooden surface until they found the familiar groove of her wand. Cool polished wood against her sleep-warm palm. A mumbled incantation silenced the charm.

"Yes, Harry, deeper! Yes! Yes! Yes!"

The voice pierced through the thin walls like a clarion call, making Hermione's stomach do an uncomfortable flip. She groggily sat up, one hand automatically scratching at her eyes whilst the other pushed away the tangled mess of her hair. Her loose shirt—an old Ravenclaw Quidditch jersey she'd nicked from the Come and Go Room—slipped off one shoulder, the worn fabric soft against

her skin. The blanket pooled against her legs in a heap of warmth she was reluctant to leave.

"Harry—please, I'm close!"

A faint musk hung in the air, something earthy and intimate that made her cheeks flush with recognition. She slowly brought her hand towards her nose, already knowing what she'd find. The scent was unmistakable, and combined with the sticky, uncomfortable feeling in her knickers, the evidence was damning. Her face burned hotter.

"FUCK ME, MERLIN! Give me that fucking large cock—YEEEEES!"

The muffled voices of the neighbours' enthusiastic coupling filtered through the walls as clearly as if they were in the same room. Hermione groaned internally, pressing her palms against her face. Every word, every breath, every wet sound carried through with mortifying clarity.

Typically, rooms in this student housing complex were supposed to be private, carefully warded with standard silencing charms that any first-year could manage. But her neighbours—blessed be their exhibitionist hearts—always seemed to forget to close their bloody sliding door to the balcony, which meant the privacy wards never activated in the first place.

Hermione felt her nether regions tingle again with renewed interest, a pulse of heat that made her shift uncomfortably on the mattress. The shame of it burned through her even as arousal coiled low in her belly. She'd spent the rest of the night with her toes curled into the sheets, her wand pressed against her sensitive clit, the vibration charm working overtime whilst she listened to every sordid detail of their marathon session.

She must have fallen asleep mid-act, exhaustion finally claiming her through the haze of pleasure. At least she'd somehow managed to set an alarm and place her wand on the nightstand before drifting off—small mercies.

As she was pondering this rather embarrassing predicament, the woman's voice rose in a familiar crescendo, breathless gasps building to another earth-shattering climax that made Hermione quite jealous.

"—on—ore?" The voices suddenly lowered to something barely audible, just a rumble of masculine satisfaction and feminine giggles. But Hermione already knew what was coming—she'd listened to this particular symphony enough times to recognise the rhythm by heart. Sure enough, within moments, the moaning restarted with renewed vigour.

Hermione sighed deeply, pressing her thighs together against the insistent throb between them. She glanced at the clock—barely four in the morning, still two hours before sunrise. She might as well give in and rub one out properly before starting her day. It wasn't as if she'd be able to concentrate on anything else with this soundtrack playing in the background.

She'd been planning on doing some advanced reading before term started, getting ahead on her Arithmancy theorems, but that seemed laughably optimistic now.

With a resigned swish of her wand, her damp knickers and loose shirt vanished from her body, reappearing neatly folded in the clothes bin across the room. The cool air kissed her bare skin, making her nipples pebble instantly. She tucked herself back under the covers, the sheets sliding against her naked form as she settled into a comfortable position.

Her wand found its familiar place against her already swollen clit, the vibration charm humming to life at a whispered command. Her other hand found her breast, fingers rolling the sensitive peak as the neighbours' passion play continued its reliable rhythm through the walls.

If she couldn't beat them, she might as well join them—in spirit, at least.

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Hermione, with one foot tucked flush against her pelvis, reached back, raising her other leg and the opposite arm in a compass pose. A book levitated before

her, tracking her eye movements and adjusting its height automatically. She'd only really started combining yoga with reading after her seventh year at Hogwarts, when she'd begun caring more about her physical health—plus the fusion of bodily discipline with mental focus helped her retain even the driest material. *Theoretical Applications of Numerological Matrices in Transdimensional Space* certainly qualified for that distinction.

"The seventh harmonic resonance can be calculated using Ptolemy's constant divided by the square root of—"

Her mind wandered despite the complex equations.

After three years at Hogwarts, she'd somehow managed to become one of the school's infamous trio of outcasts. The Three Loners of Hogwarts, as someone had dubbed them—she couldn't remember who.

Luna Lovegood, the dreamy Ravenclaw who drifted through conversations like smoke through fingers.

Harry Potter, the Gryffindor who wore isolation like armour—though, to be fair, Harry was occasionally seen with the Weasley twins. He'd been on their Quidditch team for a year before being replaced by Neville Longbottom, something about a disagreement with the captain that no one ever got the full story on. But even then, "seen with" wasn't the same as "friends with." Harry existed adjacent to people rather than among them.

And herself—the Muggle-born Ravenclaw who'd tested into the house of wit and learning despite half her housemates believing she'd cheated the Sorting Hat.

Slytherin was openly bigoted, its prejudices worn like badges of honour. Ravenclaw was almost worse in its passive way—all raised eyebrows and pointed silences, intellectual snobbery dressed up as academic standards.

She returned to her previous position, Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana, the book maintaining its relative position before her eyes. Morning light filtered through her window, casting long shadows across the worn carpet.

Strange, how she'd once thought she might bond with her two fellow loners over their shared ostracism. But that was the thing about loners—they didn't exactly excel at the whole friendship business. Luna would smile dreamily at her in the corridors, occasionally mentioning that Wrackspurts were infesting Hermione's homework, which frustrated her to no end. Harry would nod acknowledgement when they passed, nothing more.

Three islands in the same sea, never quite managing to build bridges.

The memory of first year surfaced unbidden. She shifted position, extending the leg that had been tucked inward, breathing through the stretch.

That awful Halloween night when she'd fled to the bathroom, tears streaming down her face after Padma Patil had loudly questioned whether Muggle-borns could truly understand proper magical theory. In hindsight, it hadn't been especially cruel—just thoughtless, the casual ignorance of a twelve-year-old. But Hermione had been young, and the words had cut deep.

She'd been sobbing into her hands when she'd heard another girl crying in the adjacent stall.

Daphne Greengrass, of all people. The prim Slytherin princess with perfect blonde hair and robes that never seemed to wrinkle. She'd been crying too, and between hiccupping sobs, she'd explained about the letter that morning—how her parents had officially named Astoria, her younger sister, as heiress to the family. How everything Daphne had worked for had crumbled with a few lines of parchment.

Then the troll had burst in, and suddenly their problems had seemed rather small.

They'd stayed in touch after that night. Secret friends, really—a Ravenclaw and Slytherin friendship would have raised too many eyebrows, especially between a pureblood and a Muggle-born. But Daphne understood what it felt like to be deemed insufficient despite your best efforts.

That understanding was worth more than a hundred public friendships.

Hermione switched sides, repeating the same sequence with her left leg leading this time. The book finally closed with a soft thump, settling gently on the floor beside her yoga mat. Her thoughts drifted, as they often did these days, to Harry Potter.

He'd fascinated her from the start. During the first-year troll incident, he'd just happened to be wandering the castle at the opportune moment—or so he'd claimed. He'd cast a powerful Tripping Jinx at the creature, which had stumbled and somehow knocked itself unconscious with its own club. Teachers had called it luck. Hermione had watched his face and seen something far more calculated.

He had that peculiar brand of strength that drew her attention. Where she wilted under the other Ravenclaws' disdain, Harry seemed to thrive in his self-imposed exile. He took no shite from anyone, yet never seemed bitter about it. He existed in his own sovereign territory, population: one.

By fourth year, fascination had evolved into something more complicated. Something that made her stomach flutter when he answered a particularly complex question in Ancient Runes, his voice cutting through the classroom with quiet authority. Something that made her hyper-aware of where he sat in the library, even when she never once approached him.

She pushed herself into cobra pose, feeling the stretch through her abdomen.

Seventh year had changed everything.

The memory still made her shiver. Alecto Carrow's cruel smile as she'd ordered Daphne to practise the Cruciatus Curse. Hermione, the designated target—the Mudblood, in Carrow's parlance, whose pain didn't count. She'd been trembling, trying to prepare herself for agony, when Harry had simply... appeared.

"I need to wake up," he'd said casually, as if discussing the weather. "Been researching all night. This should help."

He'd claimed he'd been under a Disillusionment Charm the entire time. Hermione hadn't entirely believed him—a standard Disillusionment Charm wouldn't have fooled the Carrows, and she'd never seen one so perfect that it left no shimmer, no distortion in the air whatsoever. But she had no alternative explanation, and Harry wasn't the sort to volunteer information. So the mystery remained, filed away in the back of her mind alongside a dozen other inexplicable things about Harry Potter.

What followed was one of the most complicated magics Hermione had ever witnessed.

He'd used some sort of sensory transfer—a medical spell employed by Healers to feel whatever their patient felt, making diagnosis easier. But Harry had inverted it, twisted it into something new. The curse would register on Daphne's wand. The dark magic would mark Hermione's magical signature. But the actual pain would flow to Harry instead.

"As long as Greengrass doesn't actually want to hurt anyone," he'd explained whilst Alecto supervised from across the room, "it'll be manageable. Like a Muggle tens unit."

Hermione had needed to explain that reference to Daphne later.

Daphne's hands had shaken as she'd raised her wand. The curse had hit, and Hermione had felt nothing—no pain, no fire in her nerves, just a strange hollow sensation where agony should have been.

Harry had simply sat there, reading his book, occasionally twitching when Daphne's concentration wavered. Each twitch corresponded to a flicker of guilt across Daphne's face—the curse fed on intent, and her suppressed guilt kept bleeding through, making the magic unstable. But Harry had absorbed it all without complaint, turning pages as if mild electrocution were simply part of his morning routine.

This had become something of a twisted routine, one that still made Hermione's stomach clench whenever she thought about it. When Alecto elected for Daphne to demonstrate her disciplining of the Mudblood—that vile

word still echoed in her mind, spoken with such casual cruelty—the performance had to be flawless. The Death Eater would stand there, arms crossed, dark eyes gleaming with sadistic anticipation, waiting for screams that never came.

Hermione never felt the pain. Not a single nerve firing in agony. And she never saw Harry during the times Alecto was present—whatever magic he employed went far beyond a standard Disillusionment Charm. She'd stopped trying to figure it out. Some mysteries weren't meant to be solved, only accepted with gratitude.

Of course, later that year was when the Boy-Who-Lived—Hogwarts' number one bell-end—finally defeated the Dark Lord. Hermione remembered the moment the news broke: the sudden silence in the Great Hall, followed by an explosion of celebration that felt surreal after months of terror. Students had wept openly, embraced strangers, laughed with a hysteria that bordered on madness. She'd stood frozen amidst it all, unable to quite believe it was over.

Later, at the end of the year, she and Daphne had finally admitted their growing feelings for the stoic Gryffindor loner who only seemed to care for his studies and research. The confession had tumbled out one night in the Astronomy Tower, both of them slightly drunk on Firewhisky Daphne had smuggled from Hogsmeade. Words that had been bottled up for months spilling out between nervous laughter and the clink of the bottle passing between them.

But they couldn't really act upon it, could they? The war might have ended, but its scars ran deep.

First, there were Hermione's insecurities, gnawing at her like particularly persistent pixies. She'd never really taken care of her looks before—survival had seemed more important than beauty. She wasn't fat, precisely, but she was soft in places where other girls were angular. Her two large front teeth dominated her smile, making her self-conscious about laughing too widely. Her glasses were thick, distorting her eyes behind their lenses, and her hair was an untamed mess that resisted every charm she'd ever tried.

Standing next to Daphne—all aristocratic cheekbones and silky blonde hair—she'd felt like a particularly dowdy house-elf.

Whilst Daphne had her family as a problem—a problem that made Hermione's insecurities seem trivial by comparison. The Greengrass name carried weight, but it also carried expectations, obligations, and now, the taint of collaboration. Being the unmarked daughter of marked Death Eaters was its own particular kind of hell.

Thankfully, there was a two-year break whilst both of them planned to pursue their Mystical Magical Masters—the postgraduate programme that followed the standard seven years at Hogwarts—and establish their own business involving potions and ingredients. The idea had sparked during one of their late-night study sessions, Daphne's expertise in brewing meeting Hermione's theoretical knowledge.

This was precisely why Arithmancy was part of her major. The discipline wasn't limited to spell creation; the need to calculate every magical interaction and theoretical variable applied equally to potion creation, where a single miscalculation could mean the difference between a healing draught and a toxic sludge. The equations danced in her head even now, beautiful in their complexity.

At first, they'd planned on building their business from scratch, starting fresh without the baggage of old names. Daphne was no longer heir apparent anyway.

But because her father, mother, and younger sister were actual branded supporters of the Dark Lord—their left forearms forever marred by that serpentine skull—the Greengrass estate had defaulted to Daphne. The irony wasn't lost on anyone: the daughter who'd refused the Mark inheriting everything from those who'd embraced it.

Of course, the inheritance came with significant consequences that had kept them drowning in paperwork for months.

The Greengrass estate, given its support of the Dark Lord, had been required to make extensive restitutions. The initial demands from the Wizengamot had been crushing—enough to bankrupt even an Ancient and Noble house. But with the proper lawyer, they'd managed to negotiate it down to something survivable, especially given that Daphne, as the new Head of House, had officially disowned both her parents and Astoria from the Greengrass line.

The memory of that particular confrontation still made Hermione shudder. They'd already been diminished—all those who bore the Dark Mark had been reduced to less than Squibs when the Dark Lord fell, their magic rotting away with the serpent brand that had bound them to him. But the Greengrass family magic had remained, a thin thread of power that kept them tethered to something greater than themselves.

The disownment had severed even that.

The screaming. The thrown curses that fizzled into nothing halfway across the room. Astoria's face twisted with rage as the family magic rejected her, peeling away like a second skin being stripped. She'd collapsed, gasping, hollow in a way that went beyond the physical. Whatever spark had remained—that last ember of magical identity—had been snuffed out entirely. She wasn't just ordinary now. She was *empty*.

The Ministry of Magic, despite having just fought a war over blood purity, didn't really want to lose too many of their Ancient and Noble houses. Political pragmatism won out over justice, as it so often did. The same families who'd funded the Dark Lord's rise now funded the Ministry's reconstruction efforts. Some things, it seemed, never truly changed.

Hermione had helped Daphne re-establish everything, even accepting when Daphne made her a secondary line of the Greengrass family despite her Muggle-born status. The ritual had been ancient, complex, and surprisingly painful—runes carved into the air that sank into her skin, words in a language older than Latin that burned her throat to speak. But afterwards, she'd felt the family magic humming beneath her skin, accepting her in ways wizarding society never had.

With this new foundation, they'd started recouping the estate's holdings—mostly farms and apothecaries scattered across Britain and France. But everything was frustratingly slow, money needing to be reinvested back into the business for it to continue growing. Every Galleon counted. Every Sickle was tracked. Every Knut carefully allocated.

Which was precisely why both of them were living in this housing complex instead of somewhere with better amenities. The luxury flats—with their private libraries, self-cleaning kitchens, and proper soundproofing—remained a dream for now.

During that time, she'd also worked on herself with the dedication she'd once reserved for exams. She took care of her diet, counting calories and learning about nutrition beyond "eat your vegetables." She exercised, discovering muscles she'd never known existed as they screamed in protest during those first brutal weeks. She had her eyesight corrected through a painful but effective spell that had left her dizzy for days. Even her hair had been tamed through a combination of potions and charms that Daphne had taught her, the wild curls now falling in soft waves rather than exploding outward like an angry kneazle.

Gone was her previous softness, melted away through months of discipline and determination. Her body had transformed—leaner, stronger, more confident in its movements. The mirror showed someone she barely recognised. The same brown eyes, yes, but everything else refined, polished, sharpened into something new.

Sometimes she wondered if she'd lost something essential in the transformation. Would the old Hermione even recognise this carefully cultivated version of herself? And after the ritual that had bound her to the Greengrass line, was she even the same person at all?

Even Daphne no longer looked the same. After banishing her parents from the family line, certain recessive traits from further up the family tree had begun to manifest. Her hair had darkened from platinum blonde to honey-gold. Her features had shifted subtly, the sharp Greengrass angles softening into

something warmer, more approachable. The family magic, it seemed, was reshaping her to match the new direction of the house.

Which was precisely why Harry hadn't recognised either of them when he'd bumped into them at the shopping centre.

That had been a few days ago. Now they were neighbours, separated by thin walls and apparently even thinner privacy wards.

Hermione transitioned from her cool-down stretches into her calisthenics routine, dropping into a plank position with practised ease. Her core engaged automatically, muscles she'd spent two years building now holding her steady as her thoughts drifted from the past to the present. The book lay discarded on the mat beside her, forgotten.

She'd noticed the pattern within the first week of moving in. Different women visiting Harry's flat at all hours—a leggy redhead one evening, a petite brunette the next morning, a statuesque blonde who'd stayed for an entire weekend. At first, she'd assumed he was simply working his way through half the witches in London. The quiet, bookish loner from Hogwarts had apparently developed quite the appetite.

But then she'd started paying closer attention.

She lowered herself into a push-up, arms trembling slightly on the fifteenth rep. The burn felt good, grounding her racing thoughts.

The women never overlapped. Never ran into each other in the corridor with awkward explanations. And sometimes—if she timed her morning tea just right—she'd catch glimpses of them leaving, always with the same satisfied glow, the same slightly dazed expression, the same boneless way of moving as if they'd been thoroughly wrung out.

'Merlin, what is he doing to them?'

The muffled cries from next door punctuated her thoughts, as if answering her question in real time.

She pushed through another set, sweat beginning to bead along her brow. Twentieth rep. Twenty-first. The physical exertion helped channel the frustrated energy that had been building since she'd woken to that familiar soundtrack.

She'd tried to be rational about it. Tried to tell herself it was none of her business, that she and Daphne had no claim on him, that three years of pining from afar didn't entitle her to anything. He didn't even know who she was anymore—hadn't recognised her face, her voice, her name when they'd bumped into each other at the shopping centre. She'd been just another stranger to him.

But that was precisely the opportunity, wasn't it?

Hermione flipped onto her back, tucking her hands behind her head as she began a set of crunches. The burn in her abdomen matched the slow burn of want that had taken up permanent residence low in her belly.

He had a type, clearly. Or rather, he had *types*—plural. The revolving door of women suggested he wasn't particularly picky, or perhaps he simply appreciated variety. Either way, Hermione now had the advantage she'd never possessed at Hogwarts.

She was unrecognisable. A blank slate.

She could approach him as someone entirely new. No baggage of being the Muggle-born swot who'd orbited his periphery for years. No memories of her frizzy hair and thick glasses and the way she'd always sat three rows behind him in Ancient Runes, too nervous to speak. She could be anyone she wanted to be.

And if Harry Potter had a weakness for witches who showed up at his door looking for a good time... well.

Hermione transitioned into bicycle crunches, her legs pumping in controlled rotations as her obliques screamed in protest. Thirtieth rep. Fortieth. She'd

always attacked problems with relentless determination—why should this be any different?

She'd been observing ever since she moved into student housing. Studying his patterns, his preferences, the types of women who came and went. She was nothing if not thorough.

A plan was forming in her mind, crystallising with each muffled moan that filtered through the walls. She had already discussed this with Daphne, of course—they'd agreed to pursue him together, and Hermione wasn't about to break that pact.

Today was the day she made her move.

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END

Waifu of the Week: None

*Waifu of the week - Again, this fic is inspired by The Gacha Girl Next Door, where Tonks morphs into a random form; she's unable to control her Metamorphmagus abilities unless she experiences satisfaction.

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