

Dico Justicia

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Hermione uses her talent with fire to find justice for Harry and Severus and finds her true passion as a result.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Dumbledore spent quite a bit of time pondering the wisdom of permitting Miss Granger such leeway into the Restricted Section, but due to his denial of reality, it took him a long while to realize that maybe, just maybe it was his own fault. It took even more time for him to realize how much harm he caused in the name of the "greater good", almost one hundred and fifty years. At the end of that time, once Dumbledore had really seen all the damage he caused, he truly did repent, and he was finally free.

After the battle, when people were regrouping, finding their loved ones or just basking in the concept of peace, Hermione Granger couldn't stop thinking. She had not gone with the Weasleys. She didn't want to intrude on their family time. Harry had gone to sleep, after finding an elf willing to give him a sandwich, and Hermione thought that he needed the rest. But with her mind racing, Hermione decided to sit and do some Arithmantic calculations with the information she had. By the third time she ran the same formula, Hermione was seething. One could hear her hair crackling with the energy she was trying to contain. She had mathemagical proof that Dumbledore engineered everything. He never considered anyone else's opinion. He thought himself a god, the master chess player. It was only sheer luck that both Harry and Sev, uh, Professor Snape survived. She wondered if the Elder Wand had caused some of his delusions, but since Harry did not see any need to keep the thing, she didn't think about it for long. What could she do? She had to do something. A memory struck her, potent enough to get through her angry ruminations, of a spell that might be what she needed in an obscure book in the Restricted Section of the Library.

She went up to Gryffindor tower to get her book bag and some parchment and quills. She found Harry sitting calmly in the common room.

Hearing some noise, Harry looked up at his best friend and inquired, "Hermione, do you need some help? You've got that look in your eye."

"No, Harry," she responded in a tone of fond exasperation, "I just thought of something I need to research."

That made Harry smile. "Of course, Hermione. I'm glad some things haven't changed!" Harry seemed to get lost in a reminiscence at that point.

Hermione swiftly walked to the library. She stomped carefully (it was a library, after all) to the part of the Restricted Section that housed the books that spoke of souls caught between the worlds. Ah, there it was: *Spells That Can Affect the Hereafter*. She quickly paged through to the section she remembered. And then she smiled. If anyone had seen that smile, they would have been very, very frightened.

"Dico Justicia: A wizard or witch with a talent for flames may, at great risk to themselves, call for the flames of Magical Justice to burn a soul that is in purgatory until such time as the soul repents. This requires a magical portrait or other magi-soul imbued item of the person who is to be tried. If the witch or wizard is wrong, and the person in question is innocent of the crimes he or she is accused of, the accuser will burn until such time as they repent the action truly."

Hermione was very talented with flames. She could call a bluebell flame at age twelve. She had set Professor Snape's robes on fire. She'd made sure the fires were controlled yet warming when they were in the Forest of Dean. She knew she could do this.

Harry had said that he had met up with Dumbledore in that in-between place that he had seen as King's Cross. So, Hermione was fairly certain that meant the ex-headmaster was in purgatory. He had not moved on; he had been there to greet Harry.

Dico Justicia wasn't really a spell, more of an invocation. Hermione memorized it, then stalked determinedly to the headmaster's office. She knew she had to do this before she lost her nerve or became convinced that she should not be the one to mete out justice.

She stopped outside the headmaster's office and took a deep breath. She then strode in confidently. "Hello, Professor Dumbledore," she greeted the portrait.

"Hello, child," he responded. "I always knew that you would manage to figure it all out and help Harry."

"But I didn't, sir. You sent the headmaster to his death without the information about the Elder Wand, and even after the disaster with Nagini, it was only chance that we were able to figure out what was needed." Hermione wasn't pulling any punches.

"It was not chance, Hermione. I knew what I was doing. It had to work." Dumbledore was quite certain of his place in the world he created.

"Well, sir, if you knew that, then you know what I'm going to do next is necessary." She stated as she pulled out her wand.

"Miss Granger, you really should not be doing magic in here!" Dumbledore sounded nervous. He emphatically did not want to deal with this little witch. She looked far too determined to mean well to his present state of being. He started out of his frame when Hermione pointed her wand directly at him and started to chant.

"Servo glacialis in locus. Ego accerso Justicia! Veneficus Temerarius meus dico. Si is est mereo mereor may incendia exuro is crimus is prodigium insquequo is! Ego oro vobis, Veneficus, in nomen of Harry James Potter quod Severus Tobias Snape, reperio justicia in meus flamma!"

She finished her chant and braced herself, eyes closed, waiting for Magic to find her lacking and immolate her.

"Open your eyes, you silly chit!"

Hermione turned toward the now familiar sound and slowly opened her eyes. Phineas Black spoke to her from his portrait across the room.

"Only a Mudblood. You work an amazing piece of magic, you punish a man who thought himself above it all, and you CLOSE YOUR EYES?" Oddly, this wasn't as derisive a tone as he usually used.

She quickly spun around to see the portrait of Dumbledore; it was completely in flames, the man trapped within, screaming something about how everything he had done was for the greater good.

Hermione smiled to herself as she walked out of the office. What she had done may not have been for the greater good, but it certainly felt right.

Summer passed quickly. The castle was rebuilt better than ever. Anyone who could get involved with the project, wanting their names associated with something positive. One thing no one could do was extinguish the flames engulfing Dumbledore's portrait. Although Minerva and Harry had tried, the other portraits in the office would only say that Dumbledore truly got what he deserved. If Phineas Nigellus Black was smug about his rather vague responses, no one really could tell the difference between that and his usual mode of address.

Harry quickly got over his snit about the flaming portrait after Phineas steered him toward a book in the headmaster's hidden library that told of a potion that would remove a Horcrux from a living being without harming them. Of course, it required the person brewing the potion to only have the host person's good in mind. Apparently, Dumbledore had not been capable of that course of action.

Whereupon Minerva commented on after hearing about this: "No wonder Albus said he wouldn't remove your scar, even if he could."

After that, Harry extolled the virtues of the unknown portrait-burning perpetrator to anyone who would listen.

Severus Snape laughed so hard he set his recovery back a few weeks when he was told what had become of Dumbledore's portrait. When he finally returned to the headmaster's office...after being cleared rather quickly after Harry threatened to move to California and become a beach bum if they did anything other than pardon Snape...Phineas told him exactly what happened. And when Phineas got to the part of the invocation that named the people Hermione was asking justice for, Severus interrupted.

"Potter, of course."

"Listen, you misbegotten son of a cur, you didn't let me finish," Phineas interjected angrily. "You! You were the second person. You probably don't even appreciate that."

Severus was stunned. He sat at the large desk thinking about the actions of the little Gryffindor. Well, not so little anymore, Hermione Granger was certainly an adult. It took a full full-grown witch to invoke the *Dico Justicia*. A powerful full-grown witch. He knew of the spell, but the fact that it could punish the caster if they were wrong kept most people from even thinking about it. He decided at that point to see what he could do to cultivate Hermione. Even if they only became friends, he thought she would be a good person to have around. He might have a second chance, but he was still a Slytherin.

Hermione, meanwhile, had spent the summer coming to grips with the unexpected consequences of her invocation. She could tell when people were lying to her. She hadn't realized the extent of this while she was in Australia retrieving her parents. She had programmed in a code phrase to release their memories, according to their agreement. Once she found them and gave them the code phrase, they were very pleased to see her alive. They had truly enjoyed their year off. Since they had actually told some people they were taking a sabbatical, it was not hard for them to return to Britain. To Hermione's surprise, they were planning to keep their home in Australia for vacations.

Once they got back to Britain, Hermione started to notice the fact that she could see lies. The customs agent at the airport was tired of happy people and certainly didn't mean it when she wished the Grangers a good afternoon. The taxi driver was not pleased with his tip, but then again, he had almost killed them on the way home. And Ron... Ron had not meant it when he told Hermione he had missed her.

"Who were you spending time with, Ron?" Hermione asked wearily.

"No one, Hermione. Just George. I was waiting for you to come home!" Ron prevaricated, starting to sweat.

"Ron, please, don't lie to me. We have not done more than have one kiss. We have been best friends for seven years. Just tell me what is going on." Hermione insisted. She wasn't pleading, but she wanted an answer, or rather, a truthful one.

Ron crumbled under the gentle pressure. He started to speak rather rapidly, as though he feared he would get hexed in the middle. "A girl came in to the shop a few days after you left. We started talking and found we got along well. She's British, but her parents had her educated at Beauxbatons because they were afraid of Voldemort. Her mother is Muggle-born, you see. She is sweet, Hermione; you'd like her. She loves to cook; she wants a large family; and she thinks I'm smart. And she's willing to wait to see if this thing you and I felt during the battle was real or not."

He was almost in tears by the end of this. Since he had not been hexed, he was afraid of what Hermione was going to say.

"Ron, I don't cook. I don't want more than two children and while I do think you are smart, I don't think you do as much as you can with it. I love you, but I don't know if I'm in love with you. I don't know if we are really passionate about each other, or if we were caught up with the adrenaline from the battle. I wanted to try and see which it was, but considering what you said about this girl, I just don't think it will work out. Not as more than a short thing. And I don't know if I'm willing to compromise our friendship." Hermione stated this kind of wonderingly. She hadn't been sure what she was going to say when she started speaking, but this felt right.

"Why don't we try this, Hermione?" Ron said.

She looked at him questioningly. "Try wha..."

When she opened her mouth, Ron leaned in and kissed her. He pulled away slowly, looking deep into her eyes. It was sweet and kind of sad. It felt like the end of something.

"I think you are right, Hermione: we don't have a grand passion. A relationship between us could be easy, because it is comfortable and we are used to each other, but it wouldn't be the best thing ever." Ron said this matter-of-factly.

Hermione smiled at him, looking at her best friend through a shimmery sheen of tears. "You grew up, Ron! I want to meet your girl. What's her name?"

And with that, the two friends sat and discussed their whole summer apart.

Hermione was getting used to the prevarications and little white lies that people told every day. She generally tried to tune out the little image in her mind that told her that she wasn't hearing the truth. She also figured she would look in the Restricted Section again to see if there was any documentation about this phenomenon.

Severus was also busy during what was left of the summer. He researched everything he could on *Dico Justicia*. He found that there were two general side effects. One of them was the one that Hermione was already experiencing, although he did not know that. The other... well, that one was more intimate. It appeared that if the caster could find a true passion, the flames would enhance their experience somehow. However, there weren't any details about what the enhancement would be in any of the literature.

Severus had to abandon his research at that point. He had to get the school ready for the new school year. Especially to try to get people in the right classes. Last year's seventh years were given the chance to return as full time students, or as part of a self-study group. Due to the unusual circumstances, a special set of NEWTs would be offered in January and then they would be offered again in June as usual.

Hermione had decided to do the self-study. The professors were available for any questions during some set periods, the library was available, and she could get some peace. Harry was going to join the current seventh year class. He wanted to be in class with Ginny. Ron opted to take the bye the Ministry offered and went straight to Auror training. He didn't last past the first set of tests and went to work with George.

The first week of school, all the returning "eighth years" were called into the headmaster's office. Harry reported that he'd had a rather enlightening discussion about all of Dumbledore's machinations regarding both himself and Severus. He also told Hermione that the headmaster was willing to set aside some time to tell him stories about Lily. He was quite pleased with this development.

Due to the fact that all the people who had spoken to the headmaster only had good things to say, and they were all being truthful about it, Hermione was looking forward to speaking with Severus.

"I hear you have a flair with fire, Miss Granger," Severus greeted Hermione as she entered his office.

Hermione looked up at him, her eyes widening.

"Don't worry, Miss Granger, I will keep your secret. I admire the courage it took to invoke *Dico Justicia*, I recognize the talent necessary to have done so successfully, and I appreciate the fact that it was done partly on my behalf." Severus spoke this with a slight rasp in his normally chocolate velvet voice.

"You truly mean that, sir!" Hermione sounded surprised.

"Ah, I see you have encountered the first of the known side effects, Ms. Granger."

Severus's lip quirked upward. He could practically see Hermione's thoughts at his statement.

"Are there more, sir?" Hermione questioned him. "I'm sorry; I hope I'm not overstepping my bounds."

"Do not worry Miss Granger. In your situation, I would also have some questions. And, in the privacy of this office, you may call me Severus. I believe you have earned it," Severus responded, again with that quirk of his lip.

"Then you should call me Hermione, si... I mean, Severus." Hermione was amazed by the way this was going. And he had not lied to her, not once.

"Well, then, Hermione, the only other documented side effect is an enhancement of true passion. Am I to assume that you have also experienced this? I was told you were seeing Mr. Weasley." Severus tried not to sound too curious with this statement. This was the only person in his entire life who was not his mother who had done something for his sake without wanting something back.

"No, Severus. Ronald and I decided that we were better off as friends. I have yet to find a true passion." Hermione was intrigued. The headmaster was still not lying to her. But his reasons for this line of questioning were not clear to her. Was he really interested in her?

"I had better not take up any more of your time, Hermione. If you need access to any of the books here in my private library, please just let me know with a note. I am sure you will be quite ready for your NEWTs in January. And after that, if you find you are interested in apprenticing to anyone here in the castle or would just like to continue your studies until you decide, you are welcome to stay for the rest of the school year." Severus wanted to get to know the woman with the strength to cast *Dico Justicia*, and he wasn't above using any means to do so. After she took the NEWTs in January, she wouldn't technically be a student any more.

Hermione left the meeting elated. She would have access to Severus's library. He seemed to be quite interested in her as a person. She always respected the man and had been almost heart-broken to think that her trust had been broken when he killed Dumbledore. But now... now she could see a bit of the man behind the black robes, and she was fascinated. She always did like to solve puzzles.

Those first few months back flew by. Hermione, along with Neville, Draco (who was allowed to return, with restrictions), Susan, Hannah, Lisa Turpin and Daphne Greengrass all took their NEWTs in January. Afterwards, Hermione decided to stay in the castle. She wanted to see what she could do with Advanced Arithmancy and Charms. She also wanted to see what she could do with the headmaster. By this point, they had spent many an afternoon in quiet companionship with the books in his collection. On occasion, they argued over some article in a Potions journal. Never once did he lie to her. Even if his answer was simply that he did not wish to discuss a certain topic, he always told her the truth. She was quite ready to see where this relationship might go, given a chance. She had figured, correctly, that nothing would happen while she was his student.

The first week after the NEWTs, Hermione was sitting quietly in the library when she heard footsteps. She looked up, and there was the headmaster.

"I need to speak to you, Miss Granger. Please come with me to my office." Severus ground this out painfully, then turned on his heel and walked out the door.

Hermione quickly gathered up the books and other materials that she had on the table and followed him. His tone of voice worried her.

"Did I do something wrong, Severus?" she asked him plaintively when they arrived in his office.

"No, Hermione, you did nothing wrong. But I did not want anyone in the library to hear me address you informally," Severus explained.

"Oh, you worried me. I was so afraid I had offended you somehow." She didn't know what else to tell him.

Severus quirked his lips upward.

"Hermione, I wondered, would you be willing to accompany me to dinner tomorrow evening?" Severus looked at her hopefully.

"I would love to, Severus. What is the occasion?" Hermione responded with a smile.

"My birthday, actually. I feel like I have a second lease on life and would like to share the day with my best friend." Severus turned away from her after saying this.

Hermione sat there with her mouth open. Then she realized he wasn't lying. He truly saw her as his best friend.

"I'm so sorry I don't have a gift for you, Severus. I didn't know it was your birthday." She was the brightest witch of her age, but she couldn't think of anything more to say.

"You need not get me anything, Hermione. Your presence will be quite enough." Severus injected his hope for more than friendship into the tone of his voice.

"If you say so," Hermione responded with a smile. "What should I wear?"

"A nice Muggle dress, we are going to a restaurant in London," he declared, slightly mischievously.

Hermione left his office bemused. She went up to the dorm where she ran into Ginny and Harry.

"Hey, Hermione! What does that look mean?" asked Ginny. "You look like you just got asked out on a date!" Ginny laughed.

Hermione just smiled.

"Wait, you really were asked on a date! Who was it?" Harry queried excitedly.

"Severus."

There was dead silence. Then, being the good friend that she was, Ginny said "What are you going to wear?" They went up to go through Hermione's wardrobe.

The next day, Hermione was dressed in a beautiful but simple midnight blue dress with a low back and a swirly hem, her hair was up, and she had a silver bag and shoes. She looked even better than she did for the Yule ball her fourth year. She had received a note to meet Severus at the front door at seven p.m. She started out of Gryffindor tower and was followed by Harry and Ginny and most of everyone else, because they were quite curious as to where she was going, and who she might be going with. Harry and Ginny refused to say.

She reached the door and saw Severus dressed in a well tailored grey suit with a white shirt and a dark blue tie. His hair was tied back. He looked absolutely striking. He looked up and saw Hermione, and she saw his breath catch. She smiled at him, and when he reached out, she placed her hand in his.

"Shall we go, Miss Granger?"

"But of course, Headmaster." Hermione smiled again when she saw the looks on most every one's faces. Harry, Ginny, and...oddly...Draco all just looked bemused.

Hermione and Severus had a wonderful dinner in a small Italian restaurant in London. They, as usual, had quite a bit to talk about. And they enjoyed each other's company.

Severus Apparated them back to the gates of Hogwarts. As they walked slowly back, Hermione said, "I really don't want this night to end. I thought this was going to be what I could have with Ron, but that would have never happened. We never could talk about the same things. With you, though, Severus, I can be myself." Severus practically preened hearing this.

"I hope this is the beginning of something long-lasting, Hermione. I had to wait until after your NEWTs. I want you to know that being able to tell Harry about Lily, I was able to let that part of my life go. I am hoping that this, with you, will be something real." Severus waited for Hermione to respond. He figured it was too soon and said, "I understand if you don't want this, Hermione." But something in him started to die as he said that.

"That is the first lie you have told me since we came back to Hogwarts, Severus." Hermione had tears running down her face. "I would like to see what will happen next."

Severus gently took her face in his hands and leaned down and kissed her. It started off sweet, then grew into something passionate. And as that happened, they were both taken with a feeling of fire, of joining. Each could almost feel what the other was feeling. It was amazing.

"You truly are incomparable, witch! The things you have accomplished astound me. And now I know why this phenomenon was not described. There are no words."

"No, Severus, there aren't."

They slowly walked into the castle. Severus led Hermione to the headmaster's living quarters. She had been in his private library, but not his sitting room or bedroom. He walked her over to his favorite chair and sat down, pulling her into his lap. She wriggled around a bit, getting comfortable, then rested her cheek against his chest. He put his arms around her and kissed the top of her head. She smiled up at him.

"I would love to stay here forever, Severus," Hermione stated quietly.

"That would get really uncomfortable after a while, don't you think?" Severus teased her gently.

"Bah, you know what I mean, you silly man!" she exclaimed laughingly.

"Silly? You think me silly? I think I need to punish you for that." With those words, Severus started to tickle her.

That caused Hermione to wiggle and squirm, which in turn caused a bit of a reaction in Severus's lap.

He started to push her away, thinking that she would not be pleased by his arousal.

"Don't, Severus." Hermione looked up at him. "Don't push me away."

"But I don't want to push you too far or too fast, Hermione. You mean too much to me to lose because of my libido," Severus responded.

"You aren't going to lose me, Severus. I know how much I mean to you, and I don't see a reason for us to dance around the fact that our friendship has changed," she challenged him.

"But what if you change your mind?" he questioned her.

"Do you honestly think I'm going to find true passion again? Why would I want to give this up?" Hermione stated this unequivocally.

Severus thought about it and realized that in this case, Gryffindor bravado matched up perfectly to Slytherin sensibilities. Why would she want to give up true passion, indeed?

Severus smiled at Hermione, a crooked, awkward thing that lit up his face. She stared at him, realizing that she was truly seeing a treasure.

"You should smile more often, Severus." Hermione quietly voiced her opinion.

"I think that would frighten the Hufflepuffs," Severus replied.

They sat quietly together, in front of the fire, enjoying each other's company.

Hermione was starting to drift off to sleep when she felt Severus's hand stroking her leg. He ran his hand from her ankle, over her bent knee, up to her hip. Then he did it again. Hermione moaned softly and burrowed deeper into his chest. On his next pass, his hand continued past her hip, along her side and ended up at her breast. He cupped her breast in his hand and squeezed it gently. Hermione started to turn, but Severus held her in place. He used his thumb to tease her nipple. She started to squirm again, and he let her move. She then stroked his hair and lightly ran her hands down his cheeks. She traced his nose with her finger, then traced the line of his lips. She reached up to kiss him, and as they kissed, he ran his hands down her body again, turned her completely, so that she was forced to straddle him in the chair, and grabbed hold of her rear.

He molded her nether cheeks with his hands, pulling her towards him, while he sank deeper into the chair. Now she was sitting directly on the rather hard bulge she could feel through his trousers. She rocked a bit, experimentally. Severus groaned in response. He moved his hands and started to inch Hermione's dress upwards. She helped him, stripping the dress off and tossing it toward his sofa. She sat there, in silver lace panties and bra, her hair mussed beyond anything she could imagine, her lips swollen from his kisses, smiling down at him.

Severus reached up and ran his hands into her hair, playing with the curls, pulling her down for another kiss. He then managed to unsnap her bra, causing Hermione to shrug it off her shoulders. He pulled her upward a bit and got his hands under her panties, pulling them down. Then they got a bit tangled. He was going to rip them, when she stopped him.

"Severus, I bought those especially for tonight, I would like to put them away in one piece," Hermione breathed out.

Severus nodded, incapable of speech at this point.

She had to raise up even higher, to get them off one leg at a time, which was hindered by Severus finding her clit. She did manage to remove them before she fell off his lap, although it was close. Just as she started to shake the panties off her ankle, Severus slid a finger into her, suckling on her right nipple (she had lifted them right into his path), and tweaking her clit with his thumb. Hermione threw back her head and screamed as her orgasm hit her.

She caught her breath and ran her hand down his chest, muttering something under her breath. As her hand passed them, his buttons came open. She pulled the shirt tails out of his trousers, and ran her hands over his nipples. His breath caught. She leaned in to kiss him and started to work his trousers open. She was delighted to find that he wasn't wearing anything underneath them. She took a hold of him, stroking his member from the softly weeping tip down to his balls.

"Don't, Hermione. I want to come inside you. Please stop that," Severus begged.

Hermione smiled and positioned him at her entrance. Severus looked up at her, shocked that she was willing to shag him in the chair. He had been thinking of a romantic scene with candles and a satin covered bed.

"Severus, don't think too much. You are my true passion. And trust me, I want this right now," Hermione declared.

She sank down the length of him, making them both gasp in pleasure. She began to ride him, aided by his hands on her hips. Her head was thrown back in abandonment; he had every emotion imaginable flitting across his face as they raced toward their climax.

Then all of a sudden, self-awareness was gone. There was just a jumble of feeling, his and hers, relentlessly driving them onward. They came together explosively, unaware of where Hermione ended and Severus began, and vice versa.

As they caught their breath, they looked into each other's eyes and saw the future there.

A/N: This is my second try with this. I guess this story really wants to be out there.

I used a Latin translation site, so if someone can help me make it better, please let me know.

Dico Justicia: I call Justice.

The plea to magic: "Freeze in place. I call on Justice. Magic hear my plea. Let this soul burn if his crimes warrant it. I call on Magic in the names of Harry James Potter and Severus Tobias Snape, find Justice through my flames!"

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