

"Second — to Miss Hermione Granger ... for the use of cool logic in the face of fire, I award Gryffindor House fifty points."

Hermione buried her face in her arms; Harry strongly suspected she had burst into tears. Gryffindors up and down the table were beside themselves — they were a hundred points up.

"Third — to Mr. Harry Potter ..." said Dumbledore. The room went deadly quiet. "... for pure nerve and outstanding courage, I award Gryffindor House sixty points."

The din was deafening. Those who could add up while yelling themselves hoarse knew that Gryffindor now had four hundred and seventy-two points — exactly the same as Slytherin. They had tied for the House Cup — if only Dumbledore had given Harry just one more point.

Dumbledore raised his hand. The room gradually fell silent.

"There are all kinds of courage," said Dumbledore, smiling. "It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends. I therefore award ten points to Mr. Neville Longbottom."

Someone standing outside the Great Hall might well have thought some sort of explosion had taken place, so loud was the noise that erupted from the Gryffindor table. Harry, Ron, and Hermione stood up to yell and cheer as Neville, white with shock, disappeared under a pile of people hugging him. He had never won so much as a point for Gryffindor before. Harry, still cheering, nudged Ron in the ribs and pointed at Malfoy, who couldn't have looked more stunned and horrified if he'd just had the Body-Bind Curse put on him.

"Which means," Dumbledore called over the storm of applause, for even Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff were celebrating the downfall of Slytherin, "we need a little change of decoration."