

"Another year gone!" Dumbledore said cheerfully. "And I must trouble you with an old man's wheezing waffle before we sink our teeth into our delicious feast. What a year it has been! Hopefully your heads are all a little fuller than they were ... you have the whole summer ahead to get them nice and empty before next year starts. ..."

"Now, as I understand it, the House Cup here needs awarding, and the points stand thus: In fourth place, Gryffindor, with three hundred and twelve points; in third, Hufflepuff, with three hundred and fifty-two; Ravenclaw has four hundred and twenty-six and Slytherin, four hundred and seventy-two."

A storm of cheering and stamping broke out from the Slytherin table. Harry could see Draco Malfoy banging his goblet on the table. It was a sickening sight.

"Yes, yes, well done, Slytherin," said Dumbledore. "However, recent events must be taken into account."

The room went very still. The Slytherins' smiles faded a little.

"Ahem," said Dumbledore. "I have a few last-minute points to dish out. Let me see. Yes ..."

"First — to Mr. Ronald Weasley ..."

Ron went purple in the face; he looked like a radish with a bad sunburn.

"... for the best-played game of chess Hogwarts has seen in many years, I award Gryffindor House fifty points."

Gryffindor cheers nearly raised the bewitched ceiling; the stars overhead seemed to quiver. Percy could be heard telling the other prefects, "My brother, you know! My youngest brother! Got past McGonagall's giant chess set!"

At last there was silence again.