

Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets

Chapter Eight

The Deathday Party

October arrived, spreading a damp chill over the grounds and into the castle. Madam Pomfrey, the nurse, was kept busy by a sudden spate of colds among the staff and students. Her Pepperup potion worked instantly, though it left the drinker smoking at the ears for several hours afterward. Ginny Weasley, who had been looking pale, was bullied into taking some by Percy. The steam pouring from under her vivid hair gave the impression that her whole head was on fire.

Raindrops the size of bullets thundered on the castle windows for days on end; the lake rose, the flower beds turned into muddy streams, and Hagrid's pumpkins swelled to the size of garden sheds. Oliver Wood's enthusiasm for regular training sessions, however, was not dampened, which was why Harry was to be found, late one stormy Saturday afternoon a few days before Halloween, returning to Gryffindor Tower, drenched to the skin and splattered with mud.

Even aside from the rain and wind it hadn't been a happy practice session. Fred and George, who had been spying on the Slytherin team, had seen for themselves the speed of those new Nimbus Two Thousand and Ones. They reported that the Slytherin team was no more than seven greenish blurs, shooting through the air like missiles.

As Harry squelched along the deserted corridor he came across somebody who looked just as preoccupied as he was. Nearly Headless Nick, the ghost of Gryffindor Tower, was staring morosely out of a window, muttering under his breath, ". . . don't fulfill their requirements . . . half an inch, if that . . ."

1. How does the author create a spooky atmosphere in the opening line?
2. What is the name of the school nurse?
3. Why did it look like Ginny's hair was on fire?
4. Find an example of exaggeration in paragraph 2.
5. Where is Nearly Headless Nick the ghost of?
6. Why does Slytherin look like they might be hard to beat?
7. What does the title of the chapter imply might happen?
8. What season is it? Spring, Summer, Autumn or Winter? How do you know?
9. Madam Pomfrey's potion worked 'instantly'. What does that mean?
10. Find a simile in paragraph 3.