

Oscars 2019 Predictions

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The 2019 Academy Awards take place later this month, though much has been made of the hosting and presentation issues this year, the focus will – hopefully – soon turn back to the films themselves. Before the deluge of opinion pieces begins, we take a more quantitative approach – examining how the nominees are faring through our awards prediction model.

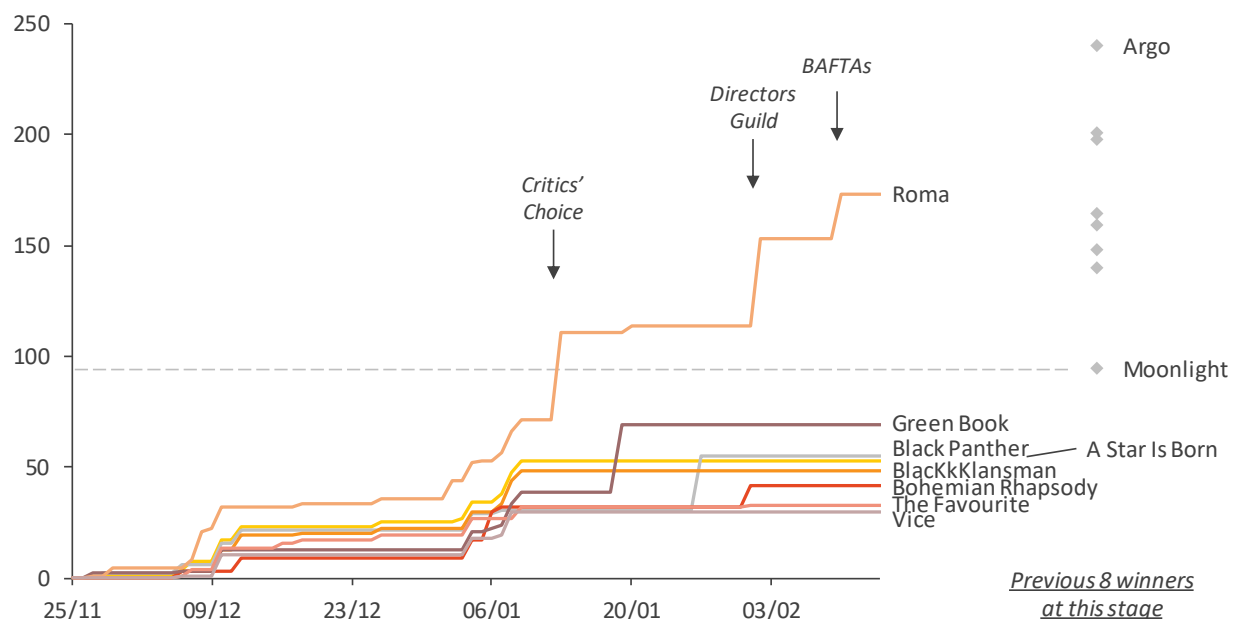
Predicting film awards is notoriously tricky and no strategy is perfect. However, our model has a good track record in recent years by using nominee’s performance across the awards season to gauge their potential chances at the Oscars via a points-based system. In our model, each award is worth a certain amount of points based on how closely their winners have matched with the Oscars in that category over the past twenty years, with a nomination worth a fifth of the points for a win. Assuming that the voting bodies of each award, and their voting tendencies, remain broadly consistent, then past performance should be a good indicator of the nominees’ chances of winning. We’ve also compared the current nominees’ results to those of the past eight winners to ascertain where nominees likely need to be to realistically put themselves in contention for the statuette.

Since [our final predictions for the BAFTAs](#) a few weeks ago, we’ve applied our model to some extra categories, including supporting actor/actress and documentary awards. With the final data in place, a variety of films look set to take home prizes at the Oscars though a number of categories, especially within acting, remain quite tight.

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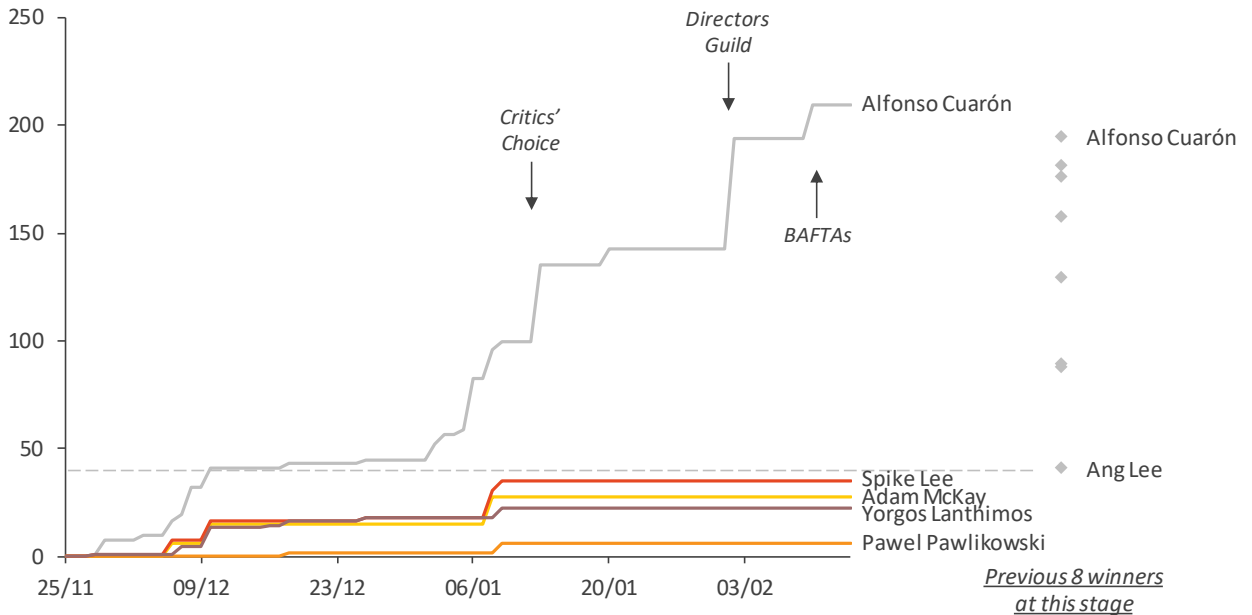
1 Best Picture

Roma has established a clear lead in the race for Best Picture after wins at several awards, including the Critics’ Choice and BAFTA awards, and is the only nominee with a points total matching or surpassing recent winners. If *Roma* does go on to win, it would be the first ever foreign-language Best Picture winner and the first victory for Netflix in any of the big five categories at the Oscars – a fitting end to a campaign that has already broken similar records across the awards season. The films which were thought to be in close contention for the main prize at the start of the season have since fallen away. *Green Book* probably has the best chance out of the rest after its success at the Producers Guild of America Awards but the film has generally been unable to triumph over *Roma* elsewhere.



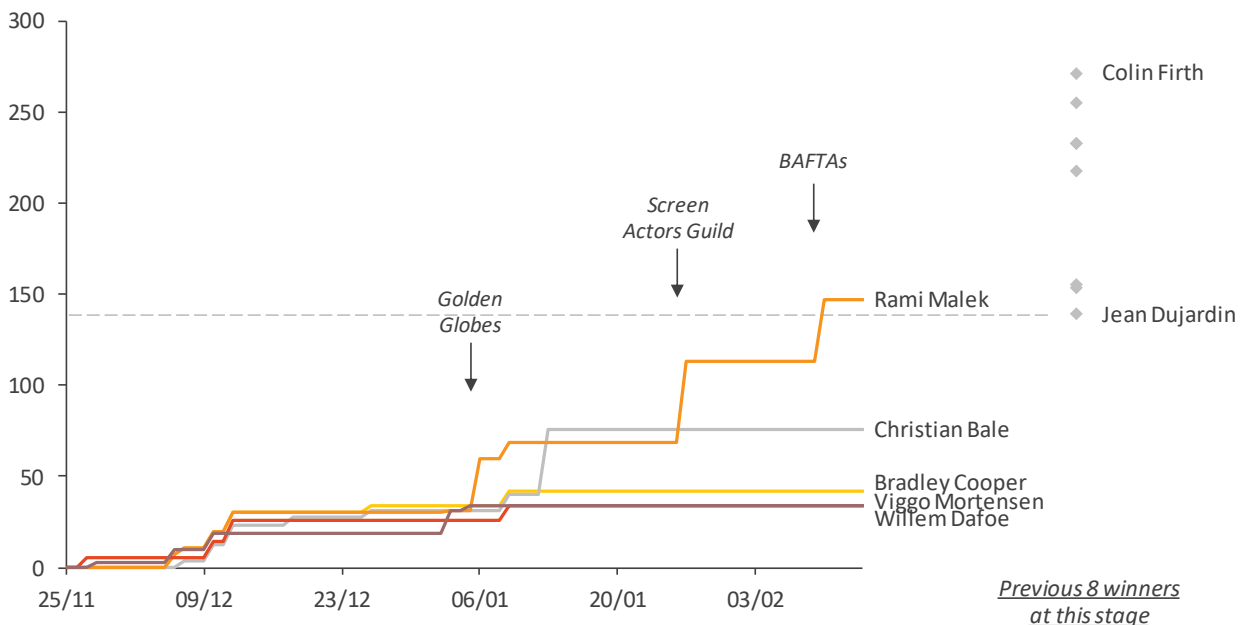
2 Best Director

Alfonso Cuarón is the clear favourite in the Best Director category for his work on *Roma* having swept the awards throughout the season so far. Our model has given him more points at this stage, and makes him more of a certainty for the award, than any winner from the past 8 years, including his own previous victory in 2014 for *Gravity*.



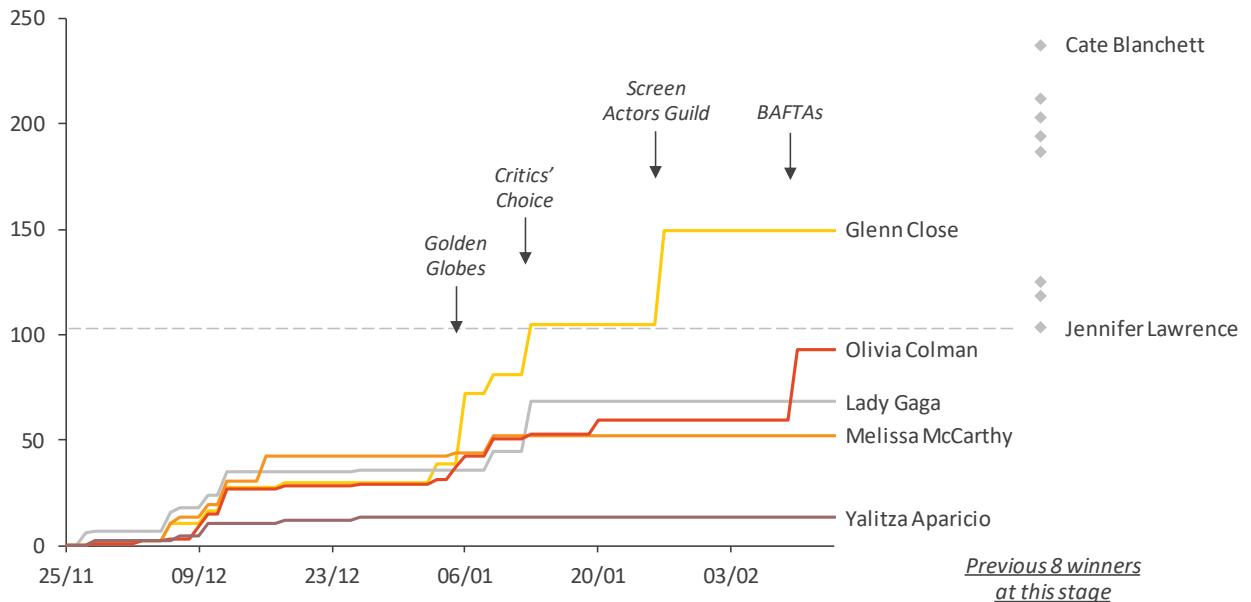
3 Best Actor

The contest for Best Actor is highly competitive this year, though Rami Malek recently emerged as the frontrunner after his wins at the Screen Actors Guild of America and BAFTA awards, both of which are usually good indicators for the Oscars. Points totals for Best Actor nominees are low across the board this year – after the success of Ethan Hawke, who was not nominated by the Academy, earlier in the season – with only Rami Malek just having a total similar to some recent winners. Christian Bale is his closest competitor after winning at the Critics' Choice awards, his turn as former US politician Dick Cheney in *Vice* may also go down well the Academy's predominantly US-based voting body. It also remains to be seen whether Rami Malek's campaign will be impacted by the re-emergence of controversy surrounding Bryan Singer though it did not seem to affect his performance at the BAFTAs.



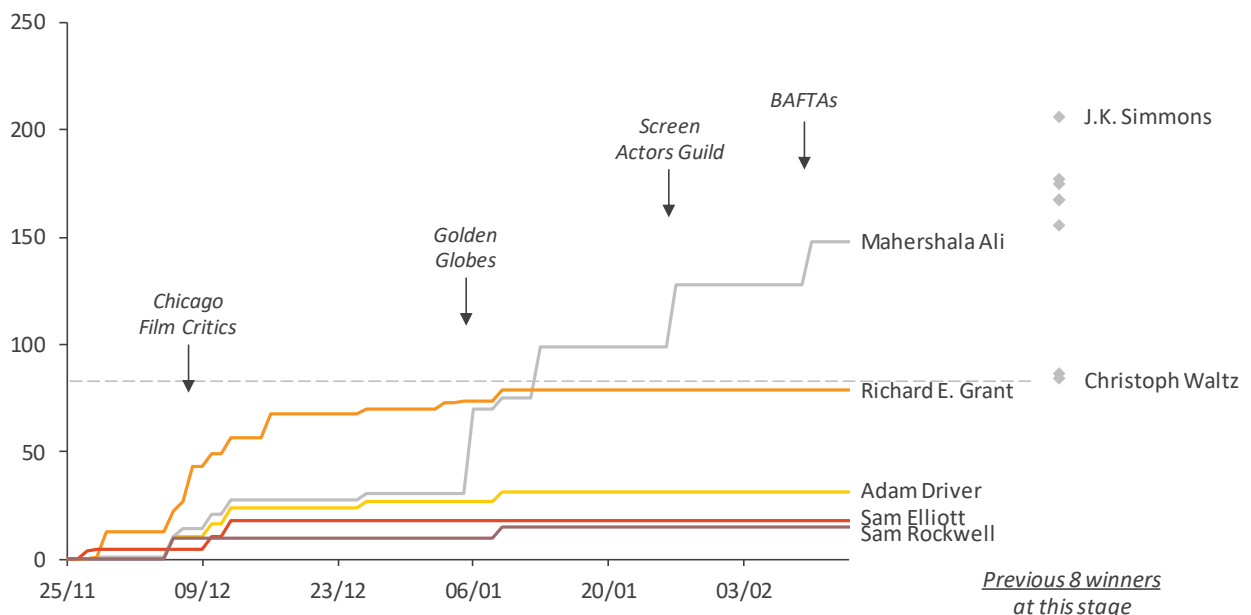
4 Best Actress

Best Actress is another tight race with four of the nominees having won notable awards during the season. Despite Olivia Colman's win at the BAFTAs on home turf, Glenn Close remains the favourite after winning several important American awards, including the Golden Globes and Screen Actors Guild of America awards, and the relatively early release of *The Wife* for an awards contender does not seem to have materially affected her chances. A win for Glenn Close would be seen as a somewhat overdue recognition from the Academy, hence why she is seen as a runaway favourite by some despite not being as clear a certainty as several recent winners according to our model.



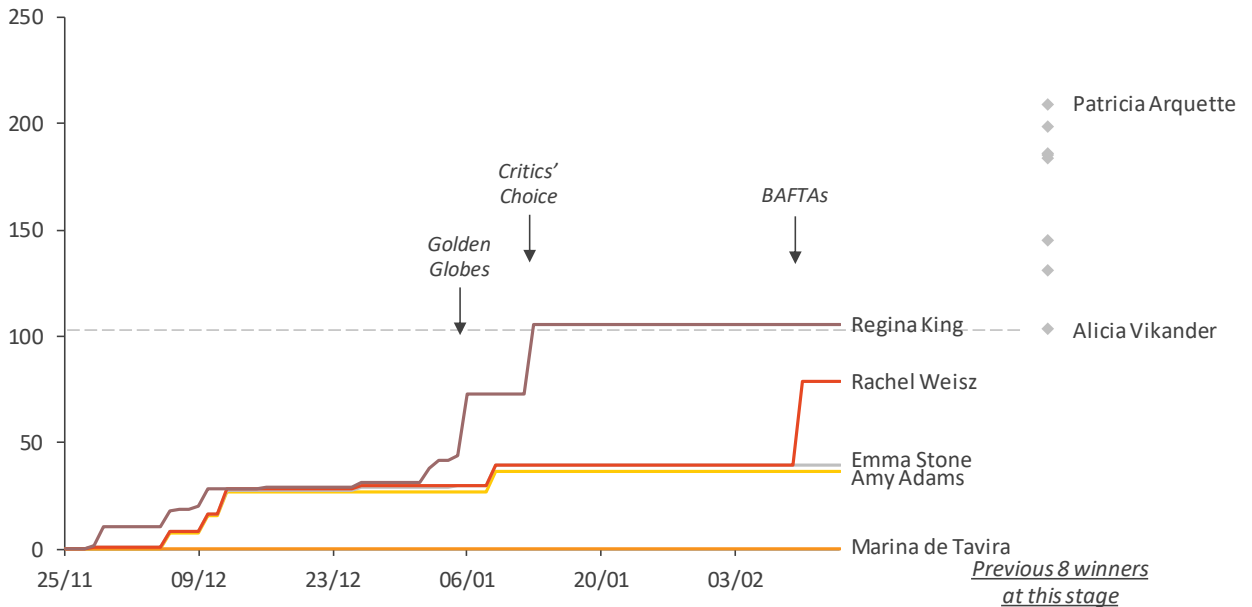
5 Best Supporting Actor

The outlook for Best Supporting Actor has shifted considerably during the awards season. Richard E. Grant racked up a number of wins for his work in *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* earlier in the season, when most critics' awards take place. However, ever since the new year, his campaign has seemingly lost momentum and Mahershala Ali has dominated the category, winning a number of important precursors to the Oscars and becoming the clear favourite. A victory for Richard E. Grant at the Oscars is not out of the question – his points total is quite close to a few previous winners – but as his success has come primarily at critics' awards, it seems increasingly unlikely.



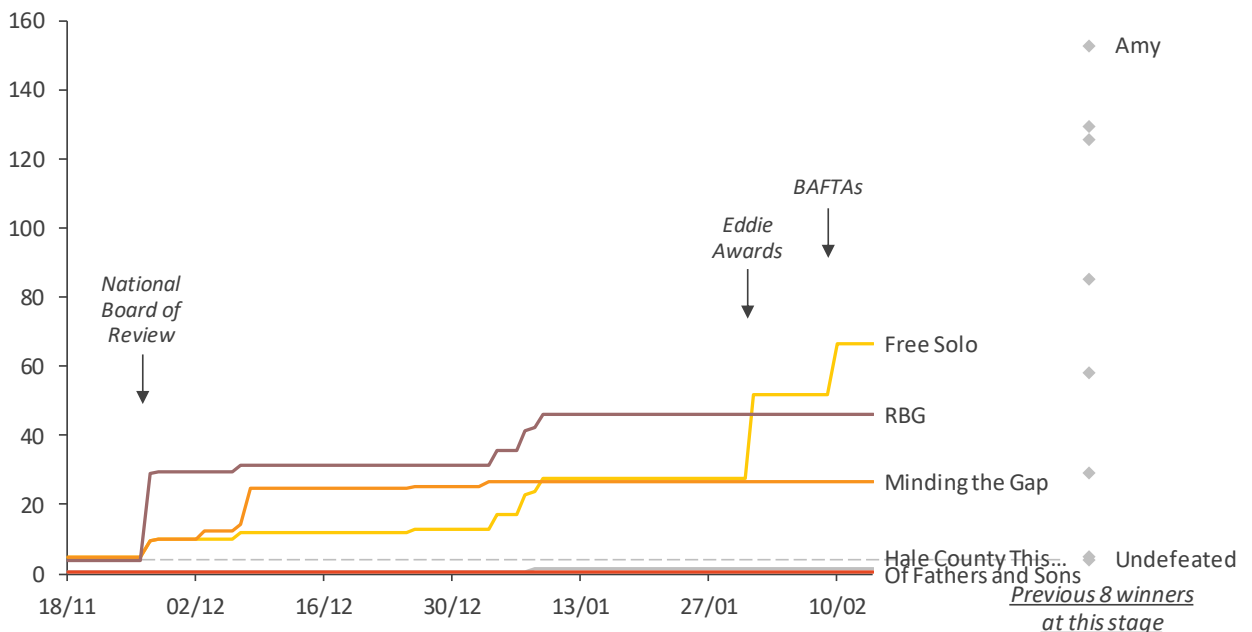
6 Best Supporting Actress

Regina King is the frontrunner for Best Supporting Actress after wins at the Golden Globes and Critics' Choice awards despite *If Beale Street Could Talk*'s relative lack of presence across the awards season (which is surprising given Barry Jenkin's previous success with *Moonlight*). Rachel Weisz's recent win at the BAFTAs – her case there likely strengthened by the British voting body – makes her the closest competitor though her points total is still reasonably far behind the past eight winners at this stage.



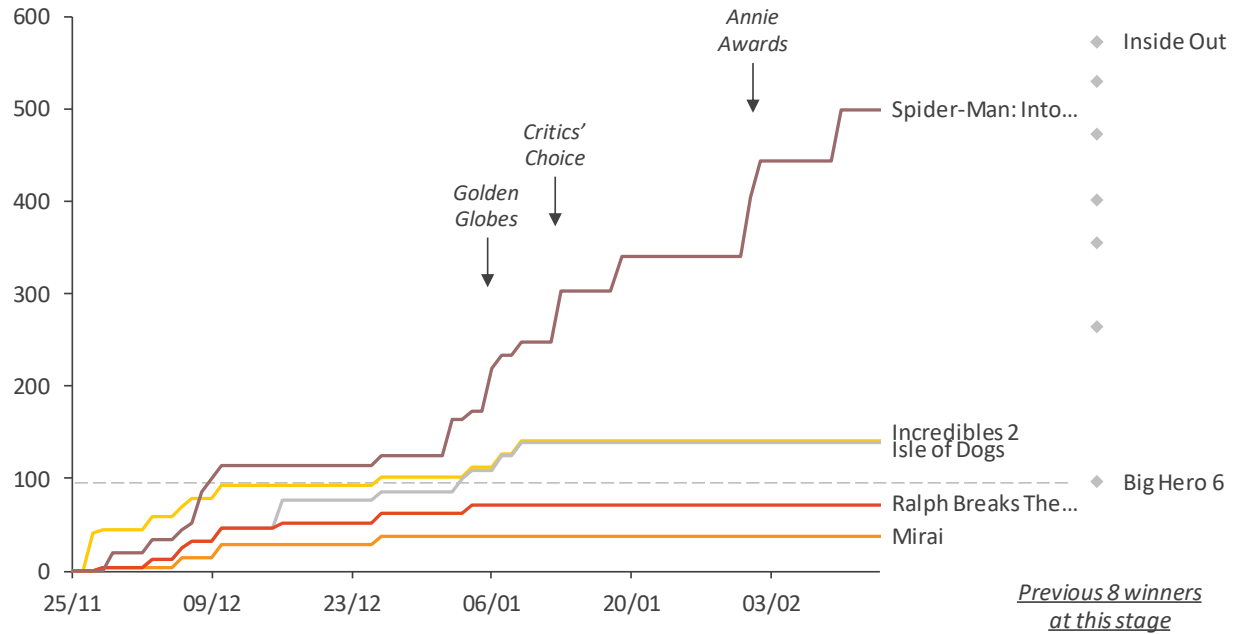
7 Best Documentary

Best Documentary is often quite unpredictable compared to other categories, with multiple different films winning at different awards. Our model has *Free Solo* slightly out in front after its recent success at the BAFTAs and Eddie awards (handed out by the American Cinema Editors), though given the current climate the Academy may end up selecting one of the more political or socially-conscious nominees, *RBG* and *Minding the Gap*, which are not far behind.



8 Best Animated Feature Film

In complete contrast to Best Documentary, there is usually a high correlation among Best Animated Feature winners between awards. *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* is this year's heir apparent having triumphed at most notable awards, especially later on in the season – it would take a significant upset, even more so than *Big Hero 6*'s win in a tight year in 2014, for one of the other nominees to take home the statuette.



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