

Chapter 4

The Keeper Of The Keys

BOOM. They knocked again. Dudley jerked awake.

"Where's the cannon?" he said stupidly.

There was a crash behind them and Uncle Vernon came skid-ding into the room. He was holding a rifle in his hands — now they knew what had been in the long, thin package he had brought with them.

"Who's there?" he shouted. "I warn you — I'm armed!"

There was a pause. Then —

SMASH!

The door was hit with such force that it swung clean off its hinges and with a deafening crash landed flat on the floor.

A giant of a man was standing in the doorway. His face was almost completely hidden by a long, shaggy mane of hair and a wild, tangled beard, but you could make out his eyes, glinting like black beetles under all the hair.

The giant squeezed his way into the hut, stooping so that his head just brushed the ceiling. He bent down, picked up the door, and fitted it easily back into its frame. The noise of the storm outside dropped a little. He turned to look at them all.

"Couldn't make us a cup o' tea, could yeh? It's not been an easy journey. ..."

He strode over to the sofa where Dudley sat frozen with fear.

"Budge up, yeh great lump," said the stranger.

Dudley squeaked and ran to hide behind his mother, who was crouching, terrified, behind Uncle Vernon.

"An' here's Harry!" said the giant.