



"Ready?" Harry asked the other two, his hand on the door handle. They nodded. He pulled the door open.

The next chamber was so dark they couldn't see anything at all. But as they stepped into it, light suddenly flooded the room to reveal an astonishing sight.

They were standing on the edge of a huge chessboard, behind the black chessmen, which were all taller than they were and carved from what looked like black stone. Facing them, way across the chamber, were the white pieces. Harry, Ron and Hermione shivered slightly — the towering white chessmen had no faces.

"Now what do we do?" Harry whispered.

"It's obvious, isn't it?" said Ron. "We've got to play our way across the room."

Behind the white pieces they could see another door.

"How?" said Hermione nervously.

"I think," said Ron, "we're going to have to be chessmen."

He walked up to a black knight and put his hand out to touch the knight's horse. At once, the stone sprang to life. The horse pawed the ground and the knight turned his helmeted head to look down at Ron.

"Do we — er — have to join you to get across?"

The black knight nodded. Ron turned to the other two.

"This needs thinking about. ..." he said. "I suppose we've got to take the place of three of the black pieces. ..."

Harry and Hermione stayed quiet, watching Ron think. Finally he said, "Now, don't be offended or anything, but neither of you are that good at chess —"

"We're not offended," said Harry quickly. "Just tell us what to do."

"Well, Harry, you take the place of that bishop, and Hermione, you go there instead of that castle."