"What've you done to him?" Harry whispered.

"It's the full Body-Bind," said Hermione miserably. "Oh, Neville, I'm so sorry."

"We had to, Neville, no time to explain," said Harry.

"You'll understand later, Neville," said Ron as they stepped over him and pulled on the Invisibility Cloak.

But leaving Neville lying motionless on the floor didn't feel like a very good omen. In their nervous state, every statue's shadow looked like Filch, every distant breath of wind sounded like Peeves swooping down on them.

At the foot of the first set of stairs, they spotted Mrs. Norris skulking near the top.

"Oh, let's kick her, just this once," Ron whispered in Harry's ear, but Harry shook his head. As they climbed carefully around her, Mrs. Norris turned her lamplike eyes on them, but didn't do anything.

They didn't meet anyone else until they reached the staircase up to the third floor. Peeves was bobbing halfway up, loosening the carpet so that people would trip.

"Who's there?" he said suddenly as they climbed toward him. He narrowed his wicked black eyes. "Know you're there, even if I can't see you. Are you ghoulie or ghostie or wee student beastie?"

He rose up in the air and floated there, squinting at them.

"Should call Filch, I should, if something's a-creeping around unseen."

Harry had a sudden idea.

"Peeves," he said, in a hoarse whisper, "the Bloody Baron has his own reasons for being invisible."

Peeves almost fell out of the air in shock. He caught himself in time and hovered about a foot off the stairs.