

**Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone - J. K. Rowling**

**Lesson 3**

**Chapter Sixteen**

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.”

“What about you?”

“I’m going to be a knight,” said Ron. The chessmen seemed to have been listening, because at these words a knight, a bishop, and a castle turned their backs on the white pieces and walked off the board, leaving three empty squares that Harry, Ron, and Hermione took.

“White always plays first in chess,” said Ron, peering across the board. “Yes... look...”

A white pawn had moved forward two squares.

Ron started to direct the black pieces. They moved silently wherever he sent them. Harry’s knees were trembling. What if they lost?

“Harry — move diagonally four squares to the right.”

Their first real shock came when their other knight was taken. The white queen smashed him to the floor and dragged him off the board, where he lay quite still, facedown.

“Had to let that happen,” said Ron, looking shaken. “Leaves you free to take that bishop, Hermione, go on.”

Every time one of their men was lost, the white pieces showed no mercy. Soon there was a huddle of limp black players slumped along the wall. Twice, Ron only just noticed in time that Harry and Hermione were in danger. He himself darted around the board, taking almost as many white pieces as they had lost black ones.

“We’re nearly there,” he muttered suddenly. “Let me think — let me think...”

The white queen turned her blank face toward him.

“Yes...” said Ron softly, “It’s the only way... I’ve got to be taken.”

“NO!” Harry and Hermione shouted.

“That’s chess!” snapped Ron. “You’ve got to make some sacrifices! I make my move and she’ll take me — that leaves you free to checkmate the king, Harry!”

“But —”

“Do you want to stop Snape or not?”

“Ron —”

“Look, if you don’t hurry up, he’ll already have the Stone!”

There was no alternative.

## **Comprehension**

1. What skills do you need to play chess?
2. Why did Ron think Harry and Hermione might be offended?
3. Why was Ron in charge?
4. What happens when a piece is 'taken'?
5. What do you think 'checkmate' means?
6. Why did Ron want to let himself be taken?
7. Why did Harry want Ron to stop?
8. Why was there 'no alternative' at the end?
9. How would you feel if you were Ron?
10. How would you feel if you were Harry?

## **Vocabulary**

1. Diagonally
2. Sacrifice
3. Drag
4. Bow
5. Transfigure
6. Forevermore
7. Slyly
8. Dwarf
9. Mutter
10. Shudder
11. Anxiously
12. Flood
13. Unpopular
14. Concentrate
15. Forgiveness
16. Threatening
17. Faithful
18. Ridiculous
19. Seize
20. Blistering

## HOMEWORK

What was your **favourite part of the book** and **why**?

**OR**

Write a **short story** using **at least 5 new words** (above) that we learned from these chapters.