

BOOK 1 OF THE LITTLE EXPLORERS LIBRARY

The Little Explorers of Dublin

A chess story for small explorers



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This book belongs to

Pip is the smallest pawn in the box. **Nell** is a knight, and she has a compass, because knights are the explorers of the board. Tonight they are going to cross Dublin.

The little chessboards beside the story show real chess moves.
When you have read the book, get a board and try them.



In a school in Dublin, on a shelf by the window, there was a box of chess pieces.

The smallest piece in the box was a pawn called Pip.

Every night, when the school went quiet, Pip climbed out of the box and looked across all sixty-four squares to the far side of the board.

"What's over there?" Pip wondered.



"The far side," said a deep, kind voice, "is where a pawn can become anything."

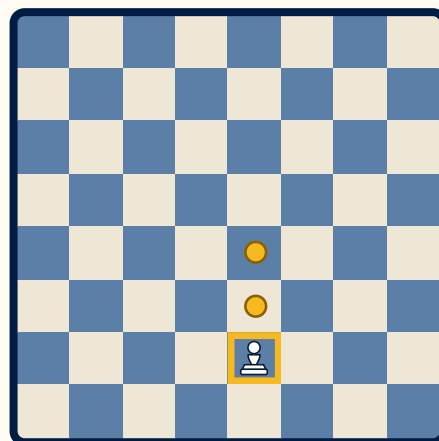
It was Nell, the knight, with her compass swinging on its ribbon.

"A rook. A bishop. Even a queen. But a pawn gets there one square at a time, and never, ever backwards."

Pip took one step. Then a second one, because on your very first move a pawn may take two.

"Let's go," said Pip.

ON THE BOARD



A pawn moves straight ahead, one square at a time. On its very first move it may go two.



PHOENIX PARK

The board turned into Dublin, the way things do at night.

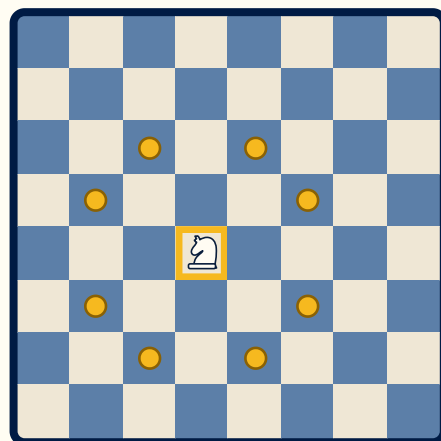
Pip and Nell set off through Phoenix Park, the biggest park in the whole city, where the deer were grazing in the mist.

A stag stepped into the path. Pip stopped. Pawns cannot go round things.

Nell laughed. "Watch a knight." She jumped: two squares forward, one to the side, right over the stag's antlers.

"Knights jump," she said. "Over anything."

ON THE BOARD



A knight moves in an L: two squares one way, then one square to the side. It is the only piece that can jump over others.



PHOENIX PARK

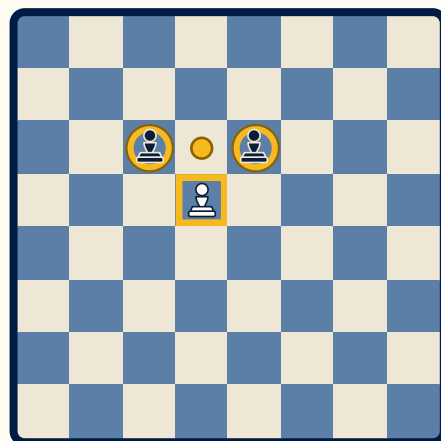
Something orange slipped out of the trees. A fox! Slantways, quick and quiet, across the corner of Pip's square.

"That," said Nell, "is how a pawn takes a piece. Straight to walk, slantways to catch."

"I'd rather not catch a fox," said Pip.

"Wise," said Nell. The fox winked, and was gone.

ON THE BOARD



A pawn walks straight ahead, but it captures one square diagonally forward. Here it could take either black pawn, or walk on.



THE HA'PENNY BRIDGE

Down at the river they came to the Ha'penny Bridge, white and curved like a smile over the Liffey.

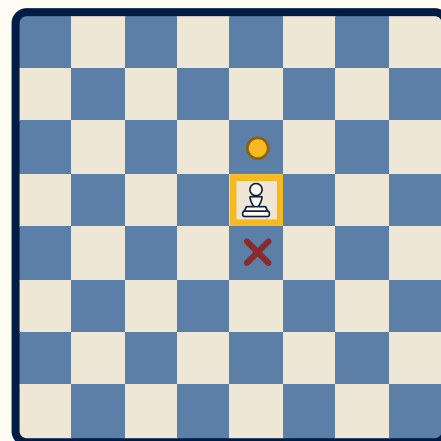
Halfway across, Pip looked back towards the park.

"Could we go back for one more look at the deer?"

"A pawn never goes back," said Nell gently. "Not one square. That's what makes a pawn brave."

So Pip walked on, over the water, to the other side of Dublin.

ON THE BOARD



Pawns only ever move forward. The square behind is crossed out because a pawn can never go there.



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Up the hill stood Christ Church Cathedral,
with its tall pointed windows.

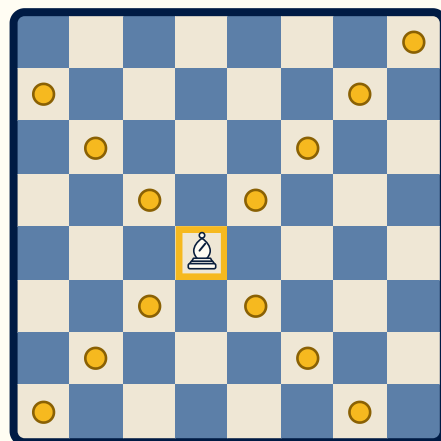
A bishop was sweeping the steps.
"Slantways!" he called, and slid away along
a line of coloured light, corner to corner
to corner.

"Bishops only move diagonally," said Nell.
"As far as they like, as long as nothing is in
the way."

"He'll never land on my square," said Pip,
who was standing on a light one.

"No," said Nell. "A bishop keeps the colour he
starts on. For ever."

ON THE BOARD



A bishop moves any number of squares
diagonally, and always stays on the
colour it started on.



DUBLIN CASTLE

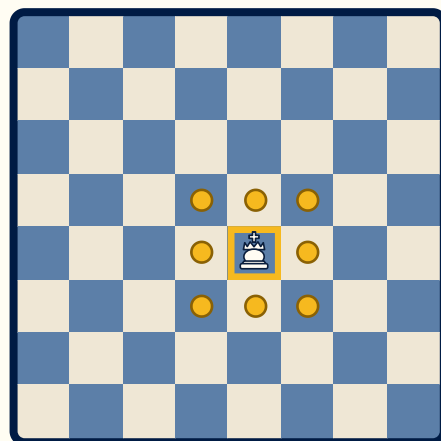
Behind big gates was Dublin Castle, where kings and queens have come to visit.

Inside, an old king moved very slowly across the courtyard. One square. Stop. One square. Stop.

"Is he all right?" whispered Pip.

"He's the most important piece on the board," said Nell. "So he goes one step at a time, in any direction, and everybody looks after him."

ON THE BOARD



The king moves one square in any direction. If he is trapped, the game is over, so the whole team protects him.



THE SPIRE

On O'Connell Street, the Spire rose up like a silver needle touching the clouds.

At the very top, a queen looked out over the whole city.

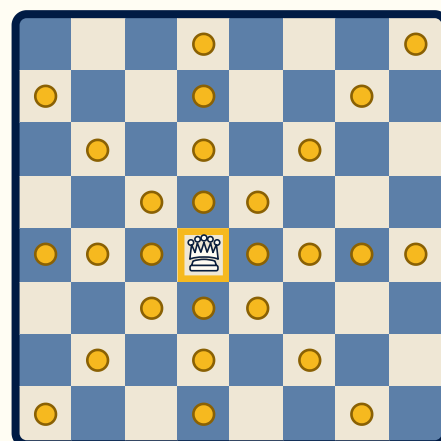
"Where can she go?" asked Pip.

"Anywhere," said Nell. "Straight like a rook, slantways like a bishop, as far as she likes. She is the strongest piece there is."

"I'd like to be a queen," said Pip quietly.

"Then keep walking," said Nell.

ON THE BOARD



The queen moves any number of squares in a straight line or along a diagonal. Rook and bishop in one.



THE DART

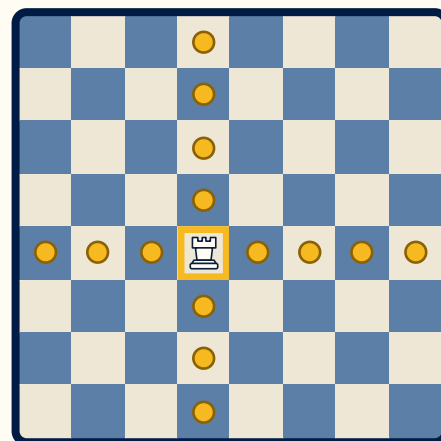
A green train hummed along beside the sea.
The DART.

It ran in a straight line next to the water, on
and on, without turning.

"That's a rook," said Nell. "Straight lines only.
Forwards, backwards, sideways, as far as the
track goes."

Pip waved at the train. The train did not wave
back, because trains can't, but it sounded its
horn, which is nearly the same thing.

ON THE BOARD



A rook moves any number of squares
along a straight line, up, down or
across. Never diagonally.



POOLBEG

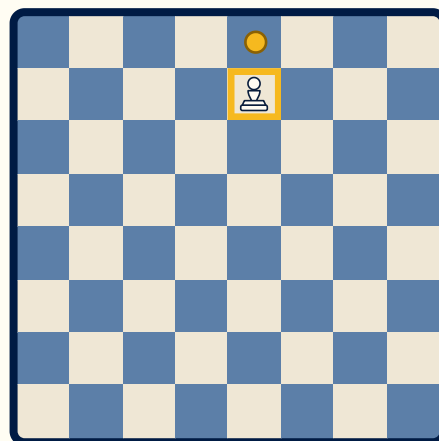
And there, at the very edge of Dublin, two great striped chimneys stood by the sea, red and white, like two rooks at the corners of a board.

"The last square," said Nell.

Pip took one more step. The smallest piece on the board had crossed the whole city.

"Now," said Nell, "what will you be?"

ON THE BOARD



When a pawn reaches the far side of the board it is promoted: it turns into a queen, a rook, a bishop or a knight. Nearly everybody chooses the queen.



Pip thought about it all the way home.

In the morning, the children opened the box and found a small queen where the smallest pawn used to be. Nobody could explain it.

But Pip could.

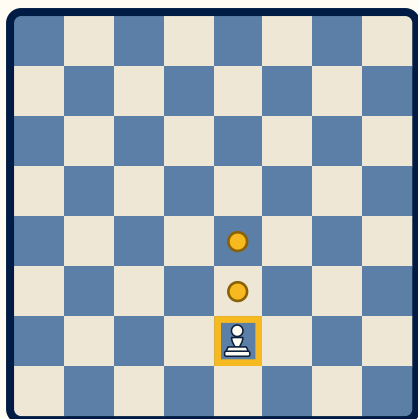
"One square at a time," Pip whispered. "And never backwards."

And on the shelf by the window, another little pawn looked across the board to the far side, and wondered.

THE END

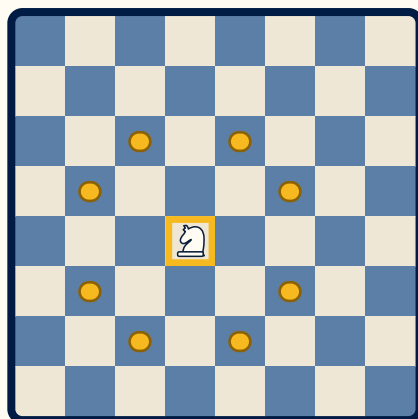
Every move in this book

The gold dots are the squares each piece may move to from where it stands. Find a chessboard, put one piece in the middle, and check.



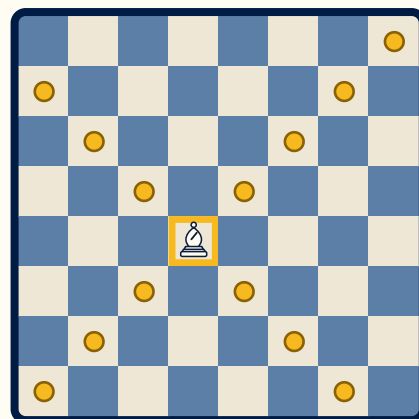
Pawn

One square forward. Two on its first move. Takes diagonally.



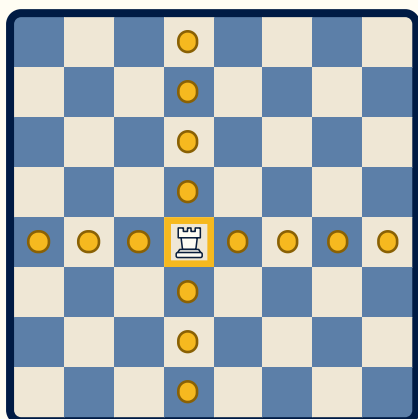
Knight

An L shape: two squares, then one to the side. It jumps.



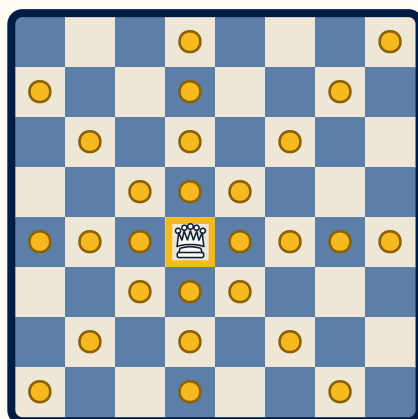
Bishop

Diagonally, as far as it likes. Always the same colour.



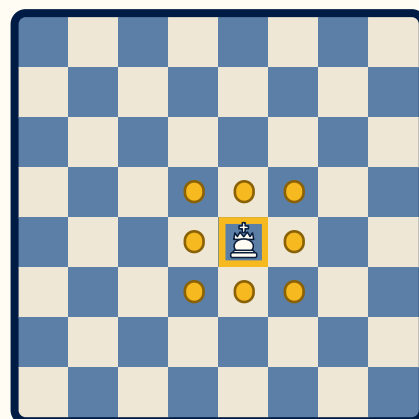
Rook

Straight lines, as far as it likes. Never diagonally.



Queen

Straight or diagonal, as far as she likes. The strongest piece.



King

One square in any direction. Keep him safe.

Try it at home

Put one pawn on its starting square and walk it to the far side of the board, one square at a time, never backwards. When it gets there, swap it for a queen. That is Pip's whole journey, and it is a real rule of chess.

Colour Pip and Nell

What colour is your Dublin?





Little Chess Explorers

Educational chess programmes for Dublin primary schools, from Junior Infants to 6th Class. This book is free: read it, print it, colour it, and pass it on to a family who would like it.

Every chess move shown in this book was checked by computer against the rules of chess before it was printed.

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