

Bourne
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creative writing
workshops

Room 101

by Tina Blower

There were only 100 numbered rooms in the building, so when Jessie got an official looking summons to go to room 101, she thought it was a joke. She took the lift to the top of the building, got out and turned left. The corridor ran around the four sides of the building so that she eventually came back to where she had started. She knocked and entered room 100.

It was empty except for an elderly lady sitting on a wooden chair by the far wall reading a book. She glanced up as Jessie entered. 'Excuse me, I'm looking for room 101' Jessie said. 'What does it look like?' said the old woman. 'I don't know, I've never seen it' said Jessie. 'Ah, ok, it has high ceilings and is an L-shape' said the old woman. 'But where is it?' said Jessie 'oh, and hang on, it is painted a pale green and the carpet is a royal blue. The carpet sinks as you step onto it and there are pictures of mountainous landscapes along the walls. The furniture in there looks as if it is well worn. There are scuffmarks on the legs of the chaise longue and the once emerald green material is faded and shiny in places where generations have sat. There is a colourful rug on the floor with fraying edges and the far wall is covered with books. An old TV set sits in the corner and the window looks out onto an overgrown flowerbed. In the summer, it is a delight to sit by the window and watch the blue-tits, sparrows and Red Admiral butterflies flitting in and around the bushes. There is a smell of dried roses and surprisingly little dust' said the old woman. 'Yes, but where is it?' said Jessie, but as she said this the room materialised before her eyes.

She touched the cold green walls as she ventured towards the bookshelf. It was full of the books that she had wanted to read but never found the time. She picked on off the shelf and stood facing the window. She saw the overgrown flowerbed, the birds and the butterflies and behind that an enormous old tree. The branches were splayed majestically and covered in dark green leaves that glimmered in the sun. It was host to squirrels, mice, bird's nests and seemed to be making a bold statement about its looming presence in the garden.

She took the book over to the chaise longue and sank down into it. She opened the book and spent what seemed like hours getting lost in another world. She looked up after finishing the book and noticed a golden cage in the corner of the room. Inside was the most exotic bird she had ever seen and when she looked into its eye, she felt that she had travelled to a far off place. She stayed in the room watching an old film until the light turned grey outside the window. Dreamily, she got up and left the room. 'You didn't tell me about the bird or the tree' she said in a daze. 'No, you were sent there to use your imagination. I just helped you along a bit' said the old woman. Jessie went to find the person who had summoned her to room 101. She couldn't say anything except for 'why?'. 'I thought you needed to use your creativity for some rest and relaxation, do you feel better?' he asked. 'I feel renewed' she replied.