



## The Small Backroom

by Ali Gale

The Tardis, Mr Benn's changing room, Lucy Pevensey's way to Narnia, Mary Lennox's door to the Secret Garden – it was all these things and yet none of them. She had first learnt of the small backroom one late afternoon while standing at the end of the very long, dingy corridor.

Finding the door handle in the dark was always a problem. The tiny shaft of light provided by the keyhole hinted at a window in the room beyond and she had been surprised to discover that the corridor was not made brighter because of it. The whole house seemed to speak of hidden rooms, cradling mysteries and surprises.

The key had moved surprisingly easily, offering the room up to her. There had been a window, but not like any she had known before. The room was small but all was not as it first appeared. After closing the door it was as if the room breathed a sigh of relief and relaxed its timbers and mortar, expanding and stretching, suggesting it had been waiting for her.

Curiously the moment she closed the door on the room and turned back to the rest of the house she completely forgot what had happened inside. However hard she tried to remember, the images and experiences were pulled out of her and seeped back into the walls of the room. And yet she was compelled to return again and again.

Once more she carefully closed the door and turned the key, then walked up the corridor towards the rest of the house.