

2023-03-05 A Journal

Heavy raindrops blew hard against the cheap walls, as Lisa's fingers flew through her bag.

She envied the rain. Lisa wished her fingertips would beat that thundering drumroll against this duffel that was her world. Instead, she only felt their powerless, fruitless scrabbling.

Her journal was gone. She had lost it.

Her room was just empty walls, empty drawers, and an island of life strewn about her as she searched.

Lisa was only supposed to have been there for six months. That was five years ago, though. Nothing's as permanent as a temporary solution.

For the first three winters, she'd worn that journal dog-eared, reliving happier times, transported by her own handwriting back to a life that no longer existed.

But that journal kept it alive, as it kept her alive. It had to be here! It had never left this room...

Could she have slipped it inside one of her shirts for safekeeping? No, the coarse wool was heaped against that corner now, nowhere betraying a hint of the journal's silhouette.

Was it between her travel papers? They crinkled and tore as she threw them about. That, at least, she could hear over the rain. A damaged passport was grounds for a fine, reduced travel permissions, or worse. She deserved whatever disorder, reprimand, would come. She had lost her journal. Whatever the gendarmes would do, she'd have earned it, even if they didn't know.

Could she even remember what she'd written? How about the first page? That was easy, she saw the inscription every time she opened it. The last page? That, of course, was her entry five years ago first settling in to this "temporary" housing. The second to last page? That would have been while she was on the train from Aech... or had she slept that whole train ride, and journaled the night before?

She couldn't remember, and would never see that entry again.

The bell rang out across the street. She had to leave now before the area was cordoned off.

Alone now, the last scrap of Lisa's old life sat undiscovered, gathering dust in a dark corner just out of sight.