

Recoding from One Day In The Life Of Ivan Denisovich

Everybody was out now but the warder and the hut orderly went to look yet again whether anybody was hiding, or curled up asleep in a dark spot. Too few or too many at the count meant trouble – yet another re-check. The two of them went round and round, then came back to the door.

One by one, but quickly now, they were allowed back in. Shukhov squeezed in eighteenth, dashed to his bunk, hoisted his foot into a bracket and – heave ho! – up he went. Great. Feet into jerkin sleeve again, blanket on top, jacket over that and we're asleep! The whole lot in the other half of the barracks would now be herded into this half – but that was their bad luck.

Tsezar came back. Shukhov lowered the bag to him.

Now Alyoshka was back. He had no sense at all, Alyoshka, never earned a thing, but did favours for everybody.

“Here you are, Alyoshka!” Shukhov handed him one biscuit.

Alyoshka was all smiles. “Thank you! You won't have any for yourself!”

“Eat it!”

If we're without, we can always earn something.

He himself took the lump of sausage – and popped it into his mouth. Get the teeth to it. Chew, chew, chew! Lovely meaty smell! Meat juice, the real thing. Down it went, in to his belly.

End of sausage.

The other stuff he planned to eat before work parade.

He covered his head with the skimpy, grubby blanket and stopped listening to the zeks from the other half crowding in between the bunks to be counted.

Shukhov felt pleased with life as he went to sleep. A lot of good things had happened that day. He hadn't been thrown in the hole. The gang hadn't been dragged off to Sotsgorodok. He'd swiped the extra gruel at dinner-time. The foreman had got a good rate for the job. He'd enjoyed working on the wall. He hadn't been caught with the blade at the search-point. He'd earned a bit from Tsezar that evening. And he'd bought his tobacco. The end of an unclouded day. Almost a happy one.

Just one of the three thousand six hundred and fifty-three days of his sentence, from bell to bell.

The extra three were for leap years.