

- How is Joll characterised in a sinister or intimidating way in this passage?

I have never seen anything like it: two little discs of glass suspended in front of his eyes in loops of wire. Is he blind? I could understand it if he wanted to hide blind eyes. But he is not blind. The discs are dark, they look opaque from the outside, but he can see through them. He tells me they are a new invention. 'They protect one's eyes against the glare of the sun,' he says. 'You would find them useful out here in the desert. They save one from squinting all the time. One has fewer headaches. Look.' He touches the corners of his eyes lightly. 'No wrinkles.' He replaces the glasses. It is true. He has the skin of a younger man. 'At home everyone wears them.'

We sit in the best room of the inn with a flask between us and a bowl of nuts. We do not discuss the reason for his being here. He is here under the emergency powers, that is enough. Instead we talk about hunting. He tells me about the last great drive he rode in, when thousands of deer, pigs, bears were slain, so many that a mountain of carcasses had to be left to rot ('Which was a pity'). I tell him about the great flocks of geese and ducks that descend on the lake every year in their migrations and about native ways of trapping them. I suggest that I take him out fishing by night in a native boat. 'That is an experience not to be missed,' I say; 'the fishermen carry flaming torches and beat drums over the water to drive the fish towards the nets they have laid.' He nods. He tells me about a visit he paid elsewhere on the frontier where people eat certain snakes as a delicacy, and about a huge antelope he shot.

He picks his way uncertainly among the strange furniture but does not remove the dark glasses. He retires early. He is quartered here at the inn because this is the best accommodation

the town provides. I have impressed it on the staff that he is an important visitor. 'Colonel Joll is from the Third Bureau,' I tell them. 'The Third Bureau is the most important division of the Civil Guard nowadays.' That is what we hear, anyhow, in gossip that reaches us long out of date from the capital. The proprietor nods, the maids duck their heads. 'We must make a good impression on him.'

He goes out on to the ramparts where the

- How does this extract present the effect of imprisonment on the narrator?

Nevertheless, I am not taking easily to the humiliations of imprisonment. Sometimes, sitting on my mat staring at three specks on the wall and feeling myself drift for the thousandth time towards the questions, *Why are they in a row? Who put them there? Do they stand for anything?*, or finding as I pace the room

that I am counting *one-two-three-four-five-six-one-two-three . . .* or brushing my hand mindlessly over my face, I realize how tiny I have allowed them to make my world, how I daily become more like a beast or a simple machine, a child's spinning-wheel, for example, with eight little figures presenting themselves on the rim: father, lover, horseman, thief. . . Then I respond with movements of vertiginous terror in which I rush around the cell jerking my arms about, pulling my beard, stamping my feet, doing anything to surprise myself, to remind myself of a world beyond that is various and rich.

There are other humiliations too. My requests for clean clothes are ignored. I have nothing to wear but what I brought with me. Each exercise day, under the eye of the guard, I wash one item, a shirt or a pair of drawers, with ash and cold water, and take it back to my cell to dry (the shirt I left to dry in the yard was gone two days later). In my nostrils there is always the mouldy smell of clothing that does not see the sun.

And worse. Under the monotonous regimen of soup and porridge and tea, it has become an agony for me to move my bowels. I hesitate for days feeling stiff and bloated before I can bring myself to squat over the pail and endure the stabs of pain, the tearing of tissues that accompany these evacuations.

No one beats me, no one starves me, no one spits on me. How can I regard myself as a victim of persecution when my sufferings are so petty? Yet they are all the more degrading for their pettiness. I remember smiling when the door first closed behind me and the key turned in the lock. It seemed no great infliction to move from the solitariness of everyday existence to the solitude of a cell when I could bring with me a world of thoughts and memories. But now I begin to comprehend how rudimentary freedom is. What freedom has been left to me? The freedom to eat or go hungry; to keep my silence or gabble to myself or beat on the door or scream. If I was the object of an injustice, a minor injustice, when they locked me in here, I am now no more than a pile of blood, bone and meat that is unhappy.