Important Passages and Summarization

Located on Bastoy Island, the prisoners of this Norweigan prison are treated to luxuries and live under lavish conditions. Yet this prison has by far the lowest reoffending rates in Europe.

Prisoners are given responsibilities and trust and are treated like adults, as well as treated with cell phones, TV’s, computers, and privacy. The inmates are housed and work in a village-like community where everyone is expected to work and participate, but are then granted free-time as well as access to activities like fishing and swimming. Responsibilities include laundry, working in the stables, tending to livestock as well as the garden, ground maintenance, and more.

This prison focuses on bringing responsibility and freedom to inmates. Instead of locking up prisoners, the prison allows for inmates to learn responsibility and to work in a community-like environment. Allowing inmates to feel like they belong in a community allows for them to find their self-worth and later become an active participant in regular society.

1. “...all prisons in Norway worked on the same principle, which [the teacher] believed was the reason the country had, at less than 30%, the lowest reoffending figures in Europe and less than half the rate in the UK.”

This quote demonstrates that the reason Norweigan prisons have the lowest reoffending rate is because of how they treat their inmates as well as the high standard they place upon every correctional centre in the country.

1. “Every type of offender, including men convicted of murder or rape, may be accepted, so long as they fit the criteria, the main one being a determination to live a crime-free life on release.”

The inmates living in the Norweigan prison system are determined to stay crime-free after release, which is a main reason why reoffending rates in Norway are so low. Because the inmates are given a second chance and learn basic skills while serving time at the prison, inmates are determined to re-enter society and live life crime-free.

1. “...in the stables looking after the horses that pull the island's cart transport; in the bicycle repair shop, (many of the prisoners have their own bikes, bought with their own money); on ground maintenance or in the timber workshop. The working day begins at 8.30am…”

Inmates are given a variety of responsibilities while serving time which helps to teach basic skills and builds character. Because of the village-like lifestyle the inmates participate in during their sentence, the inmates are taught to work efficiently and together as a community.

1. “...[there is] the church, the school and the library. Life for the prisoners is as normal as it is possible to be in a prison. It feels rather like a religious commune; there is a sense of peace about the place…”

The prison system focuses on rehabilitation rather than punishment. A wide variety of resources are available to inmates to ensure their time served at the prison is focused on practical tasks as well as skill building.