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# 1

## THE JOURNEY BEGINS

I am arrested.

*It is the fourth day of February in the year 1948 in Estonia.* This is my homeland, a land that won independence in 1918, but was then taken over by again by the U.S.S.R. in 1940.

I am taken to the “gray house” of Tartu. Very little is said. The same pock-marked *chekist*, a member of the secret police, who had been threatening people on the street with his Nagant revolver, sends me down to the cellar. I am ordered to disrobe by two guards with *Komsomol* insignia.

“Why must I do that?” I ask.

“Are you in jail for the first time?” asks one young man.

“For the first time!” I reply.

“How old are you?” the same boy asks.

“Nearly forty-two.”

Turning to the other guard he says, “This guy has lived on this earth for forty-two years, and he is in jail for the first time! “

I do not understand why they are so surprised.

What else can I do but strip myself naked?

They take my belt. They cut off my pants buttons. They pull out my shoelaces. They empty my pockets. They take my money. They like my pocket knife, and they take it but decide not to record it. One of the guards slips it into his own pocket as I watch. They take my New Testament.

# GLOSSARY

<i>Banderas</i>	Nickname given to people from Western Ukraine
<i>batja</i>	“Father,” a term Russians used for all clergy; perhaps said in derision
<i>batyushka</i>	Father, bishop, Patriarch; common usage for Orthodox clergy
<i>blackcoat</i>	Clergyman; a reference to traditional clerical garb
<i>huri</i>	Isolation cell; unheated and with open windows; rations were bread and water
<i>chekist</i>	Security agent for Communists (KGB)
<i>chifir</i>	Very, very potent fermented tea
“cow” to be “milked”	A prisoner picked by others for sodomy
<i>dobre</i>	Ukrainian for “good”
<i>freiars</i>	Non-thieves; prisoners because of their political beliefs or faith
<i>fufaika</i>	Quilted jacket or a prisoner or ex-prisoner dressed in one
<i>gold-epaulette</i>	Shoulder fringes on Communist Youth uniforms; this was higher rank
<i>gymnastiorka</i>	Soldier’s blouse-type shirt; typical of long, belted slipover peasant tops
<i>Komsomol</i>	Young Communist League; membership was required
<i>konvoi</i>	Convoy guard
<i>kormushka</i>	“Fodder bin” the hole through which prisoners were fed.
<i>Korpusnoi</i>	Unit commander
<i>kulak</i>	Farmer; term used to vilify those who would not give away their land to collective farms
<i>Maika</i>	Probably Pastor Haamer’s nickname for his wife Maima