

THE ADVENTURES OF **EXIT ERIK**

LONDON



KRISTA BEAUVAIS

Exit Erik has always been an exit sign man who sits dutifully above a door in an industrial waste processing plant directing the workers to safety. Then, one fateful day: BOOM! An explosion that sends everyone running for their lives blasts Exit Erik into a whole new world of life and adventure! Bring your imagination along and join Exit Erik in London, England, where he finds himself in one crazy predicament after another...

CHECK OUT ALL OF EXIT ERIK'S ADVENTURES AT WWW.EXITERIK.COM



'Exit Erik has a great storyline and I really loved the description! It's one of the best books I have ever read!'
- Rosa Harper-Burge, age 9, London, England

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'I love this book! It kept my interest from start to finish!'

– Jake Goulden, age 8

'Exit Erik made me laugh – it's a really great book!'

– Dylan Mullen, age 9

'We just love this book so much that we had our mom read us seven chapters the first night. With each chapter we finished, we just had to know what was going to happen next! We love Exit Erik's adventures!'

– Autumn Rayne Sobey, age 9

– Chase Samuel Sobey, age 8

'Exit Erik taught me that, if you really commit to something, you can do anything you set your mind to.'

– Kasey Goulden, age 10

'This is one of the best books I have ever read!'

– Rosa Harper-Burge, age 9

'Both kids sat motionless and engaged the whole time. The girls and I chuckled over several of the moments of anticipation and all three of us enjoyed a truly different and ingenious story.'

– Margaret Hopkinson, grandmother

'I love everything about Exit Erik - it's fun from start to finish!'

– Cohen Veysey, age 6

'This book is so cool – I love Exit Erik! I think it's really cool how he's going on this adventure and finally seeing the world. I can't wait to read what happens next!'

– Timi Omotoso, age 8

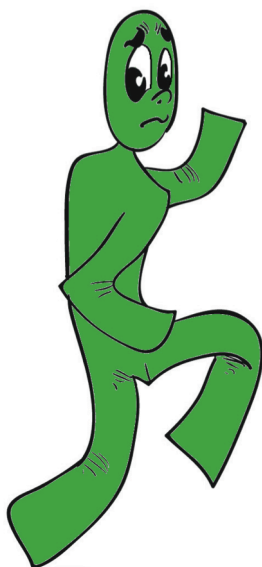
'We really like the story. The characters are so real. We think the writer has a good imagination and we want to hear the rest of the story to know what happens.'

– Isabel Roblin, age 7

– Byrn Roblin, age 5

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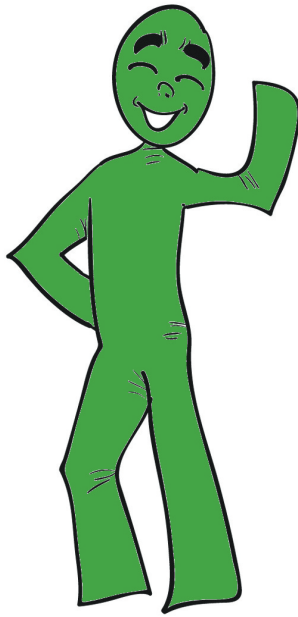
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The website for 'The Adventures of Exit Erik' is:

www.ExitErik.com

For Erik.

Thank you for being you.



Maybe – *just maybe* –
being knocked off the wall
and out of your comfort zone
is *exactly* what you need...

1

Explosion

If you have ever noticed the **EXIT** signs over the doors in your school or hospital, you may have noticed that there is a green man in the middle who is pointing you to safety in the event that danger arises.



Exit Erik is one of these noble men – a safety sign service worker – and he is *very* good at his job. Each and

every day, he glows brightly, watching carefully over a large warehouse at an industrial waste processing plant. Here, toxic liquids are dealt with to make them less harmful to the environment.

Beneath Exit Erik, forklifts come and go, workers in blue uniforms move dangerous items from one place to another, and long pipes carry hazardous liquids to their eventual destinations.

High above it all, experienced controllers sit behind a long glass wall, looking down on the important operations, making sure that everything is going smoothly and according to plan.

Although Exit Erik is honoured to be an exit man, sometimes he gets just a little bit bored. You see, danger doesn't happen very often, so to help him pass the time he daydreams about what's on the other side of his door.

He listens carefully to the stories that the workers share about the latest news, their friends, families and travels. He dreams about the amazing things he hears, often wondering what it all looks like and what it's *really* like to be out there in their world. Sometimes he *even* wishes that he, too, could be alive and out there with them.

This is precisely what Exit Erik is thinking at the very moment he becomes aware of a deep and troubling rumbling sound.

Something is seriously wrong... he thinks, growing concerned. *This is not normal...* he decides, snapping immediately to attention, glowing as brightly as he can, pointing the way to safety. Then...

BA...BA...BA...BABOOOOOOM!

An enormous explosion rocks the building.

Containers of hazardous substances topple over. Large drums of toxic liquid **gurgle** and **hiss** and **pop**. Heavy beams crash to the floor.

Everyone screams and rushes to Exit Erik's door in a panic, all following his guidance, all rushing for the safety of the outside world.

Despite the blood-curdling fear that grips the workers below him, Exit Erik continues to be brave. Like all the other important exit men stationed above their doors around the large warehouse, Exit Erik glows as brightly as he can, urgently ushering everyone to safety so that nobody will be injured.

The evacuation seems to be going as well as possible, until...

V...VA...VAR...VAROOM!



A second and much more violent explosion knocks Erik off the wall. He plummets to the ground, landing

with a dull and throbbing **WHOMP** on the hard concrete floor far below.

What just happened? he wonders, confused.

In stunned shock, he stares helplessly up at the ceiling as the last of the terrified workers trample him in their panic to escape.

I have let everyone down, he laments, feeling ashamed. Looking around, he desperately tries to comprehend what just happened...

All of my friends are still glowing brightly, he notices. *They're all still on duty and at the ready in case any last stragglers need help.*

But not Exit Erik.

Why did I have to be the one to fall? he questions. *Why couldn't I have just held on like everyone else?*

A third explosion shakes the building.

Frightful vibrations rumble violently through Exit Erik as he lies alone and afraid on the hard concrete floor. The large, dangerous warehouse fills with hot, toxic steam. The air around him billows with thick, suffocating smoke.

Exit Erik can *see* nothing – but he can *hear* everything around him **hissing** and **sizzling** and **popping**.

He can even *feel* the solid floor beneath him **trembling** like a frightened kitten...

Seconds later, a puddle of hot liquid oozes slowly around Erik. In no time, the searing liquid boils up and over him, covering him *completely*.

Exit Erik blacks out.

He does not know it yet, but this is the moment when his life – the only life he has *ever* known – changes.

It changes...

...forever.

2

ALive

Exit Erik is muddled and groggy when he finally wakes up.

What's going on? he wonders, surprised to discover that everything is mysteriously eerie and quiet. *Odd*, he remarks, *this warehouse is never quiet...*

Confused and foggy-headed, he looks around for his friends – but he cannot find them.

I don't understand... he thinks, blinking to clear his eyes, hoping to see things more clearly. *Where am I? And why is everything such a mess?*

And then he remembers...



Of course! The explosion. It's okay. I've simply fallen off the wall, he reassures himself. The workers trampled me in their panic. Not to worry, he decides. Someone will come along and put me back at my service position. I just have to wait...

This thought has barely registered when a strange tingling sensation in Exit Erik's left arm baffles him. Instinctively, he reaches to scratch it – but then he pauses, for he has just discovered something far more concerning than the little tingle in his arm.

'I can move!' he gasps. 'Wait. I can **move**.'

Astonished, Exit Erik carefully sits up, desperate to investigate.

What's going on? he wonders, frantically battling to think clearly, despite his throbbing, foggy mind. *How am I able to sit up?* he wonders, slowly inspecting his body in disbelief. *How am I able to move?*

In a stunning development, Exit Erik discovers that he cannot only *move*, but he has also **expanded** in size. He is large now – about half the size of the workers in blue. And he's **flexible!** He can bend and move and wiggle in any position he likes.

What's going on? he questions, reaching up to rub his sore head. *Where am I...? Why can I move...? And why am I so...so... **big**...?*

Puzzled and growing scared, Exit Erik looks around. He notices toppled boxes of ruined supplies and destroyed equipment. He sees sharp shards of scrap metal strewn everywhere. Large drums of toxic waste are tipped over.

Everything is a sticky, sloppy mess – and Exit Erik is sitting right in the middle of it!



Completely mystified, he stands and straightens his legs, trying to steady himself in the puddle of hazardous

slop. But this movement only makes him even more stunned and confused.

I don't understand... he puzzles, overwhelmingly stupefied. *How do I know how to use my legs...? Know how to stand...?*

In a bewildered daze, he looks around for answers – any answers. *Could it be because I've been watching the workers all these years...? Is that how I know?*

Just then, he catches a glimpse of his reflection in a darkened window. Jolted, he stops and stares in utter disbelief. Perfectly mesmerized, he simply cannot believe his eyes.

‘But I’m so **thin**,’ he whispers in gripping awe. ‘So perfectly **flat**.’

It looks like someone has cut Exit Erik out of flexible green paper – the fun, playful kind that has a waterproof plastic coating. Turning to inspect the back of himself, he catches a glimpse of his side view.

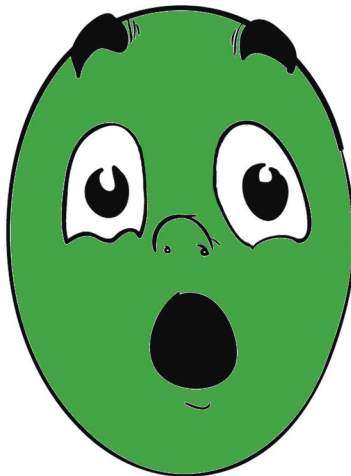
‘Wow! Just incredible!’ he marvels, staring in earth-shattering amazement. ‘I almost entirely disappear when I turn sideways,’ he gasps. ‘I’m just a thin green line – almost like I’m not even here. Almost invisible...’

‘Exit Erik, you’re alive!’ cries an excited voice.

Startled, Exit Erik turns from his reflection and looks in the direction of the sound. Once his eyes adjust to the dim light in the distance, he eventually spots the source of the voice.

‘Exit Rob!’ he calls with relief and excitement, rushing toward his friend, the exit sign glowing above the door on the far wall. He is so pleased to see Exit Rob that he doesn't even notice the miracle of his running legs. ‘It’s so good to see you!’ gasps Exit Erik, reaching his friend. ‘I think I’m in trouble. You’ve got to help me. Something’s happened.’

‘I’d say something’s happened alright!’ agrees Exit Rob with bubbling excitement. ‘You’re alive, that’s what’s happened. Alive!’



'**Alive?**' echoes Exit Erik. 'Is that why I'm big? Why I can move? Is it really possible? Am I... **alive?**'

'Sure looks like it to me,' assures Exit Rob.

'Well...now I'm even more scared,' quivers Exit Erik, feeling like the whole world is caving in on top of him. 'I don't know how to be **alive,**' he reveals.

'Are you kidding me?' laughs Exit Rob, unable to comprehend his friend's reluctance. 'Don't be scared, my friend. Be happy – overjoyed! You're like the workers now. No more being stuck here, staring at the *same thing* day in and day out. No more being on duty *every* second of *every* day. You're free, my friend, **FREE!** Now you can go out there and **live.** You can *finally* see what's on the other side of these doors!'

Confused and unable to see the fortune in his new situation, Exit Erik faintly asks, 'But why **me?**' His words are barely a delicate whisper on the tip of his lips.

'I don't know,' admits Exit Rob, feeling a twinge of jealousy. 'To be honest, I wish it were me. Maybe you're not needed here any longer. Maybe *living* is now your service to others. My good friend, you have been given what we all want. **Embrace it.** Go out there and live for all of us who cannot. Then come home and share your stories. We'll all want to hear about your adventures in the

vast and mysterious world that lives on the other side of these doors.’

Instantly, Exit Erik remembers what he was thinking before that first explosion hit...

‘But I didn’t really *want* to be alive,’ admits Exit Erik, still overwhelmed by his transformation. ‘I mean, I was *wondering* about what it would be like – but I *love* it here with you, with all my friends, my important job. I don’t actually *want* to leave. I didn’t actually *want* to be alive. Not *really*.’

‘It doesn’t matter if you *asked* to be alive or not,’ counters Exit Rob. ‘What’s done is done. You *are* alive. So what are you waiting for?’

‘Uhhh...’

‘Nonsense! Go out there and enjoy your gift. Go and live for us. Live for *me*. *Please!* I *hate* being stuck in here doing the same job all the time, looking at the same things *every-single-day*. If I could, I would be you right now, that’s for sure! And I wouldn’t be sticking around here babbling in shock, for fear the spell might wear off. Who knows how long this is going to last?’

‘But...’ stutters Exit Erik, rubbing his sore head, trying to shift his stuck perspective. ‘But...’

‘Quick! Hide!’ shouts Exit Rob without warning.

3

Vortex

‘Someone’s coming!’ warns Exit Rob when Exit Erik doesn't move. ‘You can’t let them see you.’

Startled into action, Exit Erik instantly flattens himself against the nearest wooden box.

‘Not good enough!’ hisses Exit Rob in a loud, concerned whisper. ‘You’re sticking over the sides.’

At his friend’s prompting, Exit Erik notices that he is indeed too large for the tattered box. His head and arms are sticking out beyond the edges.

Exit Rob is right. I’ll surely be spotted like this...

In a snap, he folds himself tightly around the corners of the box, just like green wrapping paper being folded snugly around a birthday present.

‘That’s better,’ praises Exit Rob.

Holding his breath and allowing only his eyes to move, Exit Erik waits for the workers in blue uniforms to pass. Only, he soon discovers that he has a problem. A **BIG** problem.

They don't leave.

Instead, the blue-uniformed workers shout firm commands to a forklift driver. A familiar siren beeps and the huge machine approaches. The long metal forks on the front pick up the box that Exit Erik is hugging.

Much to his dismay, he is slowly hoisted off the ground. Helpless, he looks to Exit Rob for answers as he is raised nearer to his friend, briefly suspended in mid-air.

‘What am I supposed to do now?’ whispers Exit Erik in desperation.

‘Like I said before,’ repeats Exit Rob, ‘go out there and **live**. Be grateful that you’re alive, my friend. This is a rare gift. **Don't waste it**. But be careful about being seen. You don’t look like them. You don’t know how the world out there is going to react to you.’

‘And what if I *can't* figure it out?’ asks Exit Erik in distress.

Before he can hear Exit Rob's brave advice, the beeping forklift abruptly turns him away and carries him swiftly through a huge open door, into the mysterious world outside.

With a heavy **THUD**, the box is deposited onto a moving conveyor belt. Seconds later, Exit Erik is inside the back of a large truck. The heavy door is closed and the idling engine starts to roar. With a disturbing lurch, the truck rolls forward.

Exit Erik is trapped!

Scared of the loud noises surrounding him, he folds himself in half and quickly slips inside his box for protection. Unfolding in the pitch dark, he leans against the mysterious contents and falls asleep, exhausted.

His last thought before drifting off is that he hopes he'll wake to discover this is all just a bad dream.

Zzzzzzzzz... Zzzzzzzzz...

When Exit Erik eventually wakes, he realizes that this is not a dream at all. This is actually happening.

He's really alive!

But I didn't get to say goodbye to Exit Rob, he regrets. Or my other friends. I didn't get to tell them how much I have enjoyed working alongside them all these years.

Hoping to return to them to say his goodbyes and to hear any advice they have, Exit Erik slips from the darkness of the box and into the darkness of the noisy space surrounding the box. Spying a single crack of light off to the side, he carefully creeps forward to investigate.

Sliding his head through the slim opening...

WHOOSH!

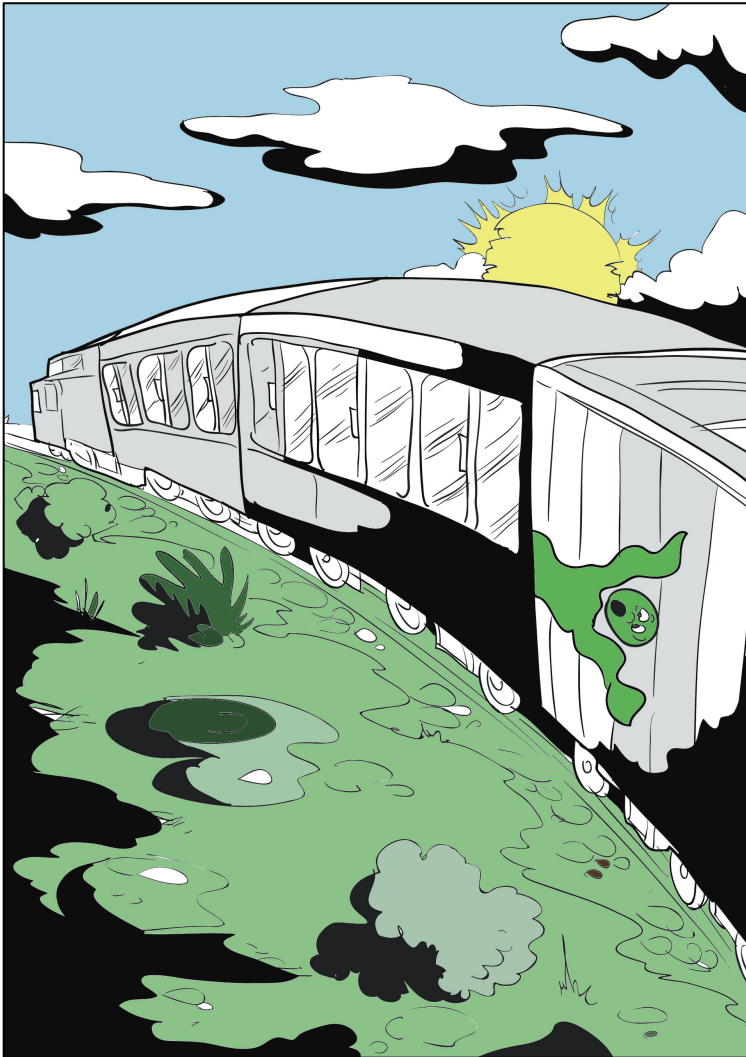
Exit Erik's already woozy head is instantly sucked out and away from the rest of his body with a great and confusing force. Then his shoulders are pulled out. Then his waist...

'AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!' His head flaps violently against a hard wall. His eyes are blinded by something bright.

'AAAAHHH!!!!'

Terrified, he fights back with all of his might against the violent, ripping, tearing suction of the swirling vortex. Fearing the worst if he is pulled further out, he braces against the wall with his legs as best he can.

With the upper half of his body flapping wildly outside, his mind is far too shaken and battered to comprehend much of anything. Gripped by panic and confusion, he simply battles to rescue himself.



After much adrenaline-fueled struggle, Exit Erik finally pulls his body into the darkness again. Exhausted, he falls to the floor like a limp rag. Stripped of all his energy, he simply remains there in the dark, unable to move. His rattled brain tries to make sense of his troubling situation.

Remembering back to conversations the workers had about family holidays, he slowly arrives at a rather distressing conclusion:

I must be in a train. But how did I get from the truck? And where am I going? he wonders. *And how will I ever find out how to get back home?*

The fear in him mounts with the realization that he is *completely* alone and unanchored, *aimlessly* adrift in the **real world** – and there is *nothing* he can do to change it. And, now that he has left, there is *no way* that he will *ever* know *where* in the world home is – or how to find his way back to it.

As his energy-drained eyes droop uncontrollably closed again, Exit Erik drifts into an exhausted sleep, fearfully wondering: *Where in the world is this train taking me? And will I ever see my friends again?*

Zzzz... Zzzzz... Zzzzzzzzzz...

4

Bobbaroo

Feeling the train come to a stop, Exit Erik's eyes flutter open. Cautiously, he slips his woozy head through the thin crack of light once more to investigate. The swirling vortex has been replaced with something else.

Where am I? he marvels, looking around in amazement, awed by his arrival in a whole new place he has never before seen. Above his parked train, he sees the *enormous* steel and glass roof of a huge building *full* of trains. It looks like *nothing* he has ever before imagined.

As wonderment is quickly replaced with concern that he could be discovered when workers arrive to unload the train's cargo, Exit Erik swiftly slips the rest of his body

out and into the open, plastering himself to the wall of the train.

Looking like a big green sticker – and, thankfully, still unnoticed for the moment – Exit Erik surveys his surroundings with more care, trying to figure out where he is and what he should do next.

Just then, on the opposite wall that runs alongside the train’s long, narrow platform, he spies something that makes him flutter with hope.

Could it be? It looks like another exit man – just like me – just like my friends back home...

Excited, Exit Erik inches carefully along the wall of the train until he’s as close as he can get.

‘Hello, exit man!’ he calls across the platform in excitement.

Startled, the exit man glowing above the door is knocked from his bored stupor and looks around. His face is at first clouded with confusion. But then he spots Exit Erik on the side of the train and his eyes light up.

‘Oh, blimey!’ he gasps. ‘Fancy that, you sure are one huge expanded exit man. How is it you’re alive?’

‘I’m not entirely sure,’ shrugs Exit Erik. ‘I think it has something to do with some toxic liquid that spilled on me during an explosion. What’s your name, please?’

‘My official name is Exit Bob. But my friends call me Bobbaroo. At your service, ol’ chap.’

‘Nice to meet you, Exit Bob...er...Bobbaroo. I’m Exit Erik. Could you please tell me...where are we?’



‘Aye, ’tis Waterloo station,’ exclaims Bobbaroo proudly. ‘Busiest station in the whole city.’

‘*City?* Which city?’ asks Exit Erik, pleased to have met a nice friend so quickly.

‘Why, ’tis London, England, of course!’ exclaims Bobbaroo with grandeur.

‘**London, England?**’ gasps Exit Erik, remembering the stories he’s overheard. ‘Wow! I’ve heard about London before. Is that why you sound so funny? You don’t talk like my friends back home.’

‘Aye, ’tis good ol’ British English, this is. If it’s good enough for Her Majesty, The Queen of England, ’tis certainly good enough for me,’ proclaims Bobbaroo.

‘I like it,’ smiles Exit Erik. ‘Does everyone here speak like you?’

‘Aye, lad. More or less. Did you know...London is supposed to be one of the finest cities in the world – at least that’s what my ears tell me – though I’m not sure I’d always agree, what with all the dodgy looking plonkers who come through here in a day. Say...’ Bobbaroo pauses, looking with grave seriousness at Exit Erik. ‘You look mighty knackered, ol’ chap. I reckon you need to recharge soon – have yourself a good long kip – lest you won’t be alive long enough to see any of London.’

‘What do you mean, *recharge*?’ queries Exit Erik.

‘Ah! Well, you see, we exit men are energized by the electric current of the light bulbs behind us. Yours is gone now, so you’re going to run out of energy if you don’t find a safe place to recharge. And, well, you’re mighty big now, ol’ chap. You’re going to need a rather large light bulb to get yourself sorted, that’s for certain!’

‘Do you know where I can find one?’ asks Exit Erik, pleased to have an explanation for his extreme exhaustion – something he has never before experienced.

‘Aye guvna, London is full of ’em. But the trick is finding one big enough to charge you – but in a place you won’t be discovered. London’s fancy folk might be a little surprised to see *you* walking around, green and flat as you are. They’ll think they’ve lost the plot!’ he laughs.

‘It would be easier if I were not alone,’ sighs Exit Erik with a sad face. ‘I’ve left all my friends behind. I have nobody to help me figure any of this out. I’ve never been alive before. I’m not sure what I’m supposed to do.’

‘No need to fear, ol’ chap,’ proclaims Bobbaroo. ‘Yes, ’tis mighty sad you’ve left your friends but they’ll still be there when you return – excited to hear about your adventures in the capital of good ol’ Blighty.’

‘Blighty?’ queries Exit Erik, worrying *if I can ever find them again*.

‘Aye. Blighty. England's nickname. Besides, you won't be alone,’ continues Bobbaroo. ‘There are hundreds of thousands of us in London. Tell you what... I'll spread the word to the others. You'll have friends *everywhere* you go. Now listen, young lad, there's *nothing* to be sad about, nothing at all. You should be chuffed. Have fun. You'll make new friends.’

‘Maybe you're right,’ admits Exit Erik, feeling a smidge better. ‘I hadn't thought of it like that before.’

‘Jolly good. Now, stop skiving and go,’ instructs Bobbaroo sagely. ‘You need to recharge, good lad. You don't want to die before you've even begun to live. I'll be too gutted to carry on if that news ever reaches me.’

‘You're right,’ agrees Exit Erik, feeling somewhat encouraged. ‘I should go before the rest of my energy dies away. Thank you for your help, Bobbaroo.’

‘Nonsense. 'Tis my pleasure, guvna. Now go!’

Waving goodbye, Exit Erik feels grateful for Bobbaroo's friendship and help. Looking for a solution, he desperately battles the worry that he's just not up for this difficult challenge.

But then he has an idea...

There are 16 more
chapters to enjoy...

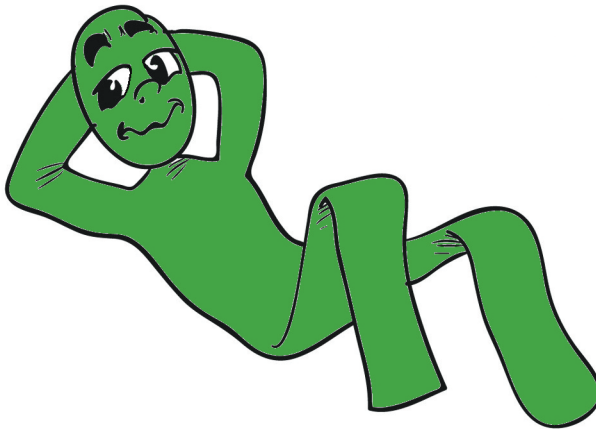
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Maybe – *just maybe* –
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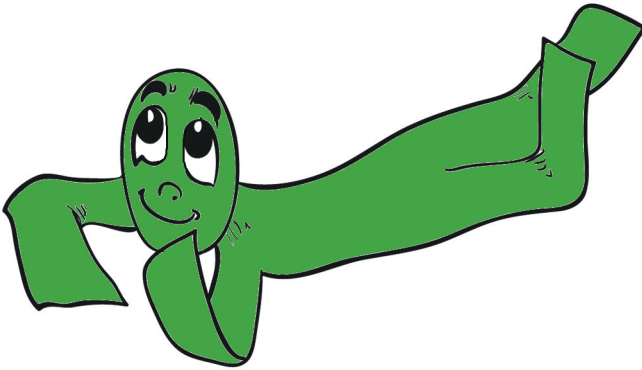


...*just like Exit Erik.*

Difficulty?

or

Adventure?



Only YOU can decide.

Dear Reader,

If you have been to some interesting places (*including your own back garden*) and have ideas for **adventures** Exit Erik could enjoy, I invite you to share them with me.

I'll thank you at the front of the book in which your idea is used (if it's a *new* idea nobody has submitted before), and I'll mail you a **free** signed copy.

I look forward to hearing from you at:

www.ExitErik.com

On this website, you will also find lots of **FREE** fun activities to enjoy.

Happy Adventures!

Krista

Acknowledgements

If I have learned anything in this life, it is that none of us lives well or accomplishes much greatness on our own. I believe that everything of treasured substance and value can only be achieved with the help, support, expertise, and warm encouragement of the very special people in our lives – and those very special people we actively bring *into* our lives – to help us achieve our goals.

This believed truth has been poignantly evident in the creation of ‘The Adventures of Exit Erik’ and I have many people to thank.

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To everyone who has lended a helping hand, a valuable critique, or a word of encouragement, I thank from the depths of my soul. Without you, I could never have realized my dream of publishing my first book. I am forever grateful.

I hope you've enjoyed it.

About the Author

Krista (Veysey) Beauvais was born into a loving family in the friendly little city of Miramichi, New Brunswick on the east coast of Canada.

Aged 22, a recent university graduate, and blossoming quickly in a promising career in the nation's capital, Krista stunned everyone by resigning her job and setting off to explore the world. 'I'll be back in a year,' she said, silently worrying that she was making the biggest mistake of her life.

That was fifteen years ago.

Now, with the help of Exit Erik, her travels and adventures in almost fifty countries enchant and delight readers of all ages. When she's not off exploring, Krista can be found in London, England, with her husband Erik and their moody little bunny Splotchy, who features in this book.

You can learn more about Krista at:

www.KristaBeauvais.com

