

'I loved the book! I feel like I've just been to South Africa and I can't wait to see where Exit Erik goes next!'

– Liam Septon, age 10

'Far more than just a book, Exit Erik pulls us into a meaningful moral adventure that, for many, hits so very close to home.'

– Katy Smith, 18, University Undergraduate

'The story is really funny – but some bits are a little scary. I desperately want to know what happens next!'

– Isabel Roblin, age 8

'A really cute book that takes the reader through some thoroughly South African situations! My son and I really enjoyed it.'

– Heather Laubscher, Mom and Teacher

'A fun adventure with a great message!'

– Olivia Cormier, age 12

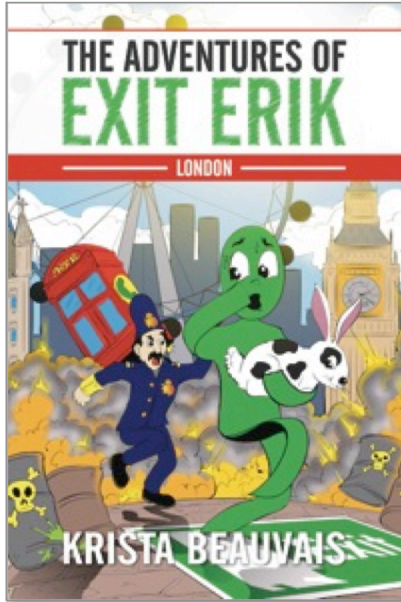
'The story is awesome and I just want to keep reading to the next chapter to see what happens to Exit Erik.'

– Bryn Roblin, age 6

'I think this is an amazing book! I love how it gives such an incredible message to love yourself and I can't wait for the next one!'

– Avery Goodfellow, age 11

South Africa is my SECOND adventure.
First, I was in LONDON, ENGLAND...



If you haven't read the London story yet,
you can get it here for FREE:

exiterik.com

If you don't have time to read the
London story first, you should know:

- > I'm an exit sign man.
- > A toxic explosion brought me to life.
- > I'm child-sized, but green and flat.
- > I can slip through cracks.
- > I can fold or curl into shapes.
- > Light bulbs recharge me.
- > I can communicate with other signs.
- > I'm new to this whole living thing
and I have lots to learn!





World Map

Asia

Australia

Europe

Africa

South Africa

North America

South America





7
Kruger National Park

Franschhoek

South Africa



Robben Island

Harbour

Cape Town

Airport

Table Mountain

Gugulethu

Muizenberg

Boulders Beach

False Bay

Atlantic Ocean



THE ADVENTURES OF **EXIT ERIK**

South Africa



KRISTA BEAUVAIS



GREEN IGLOO PUBLISHING

LONDON

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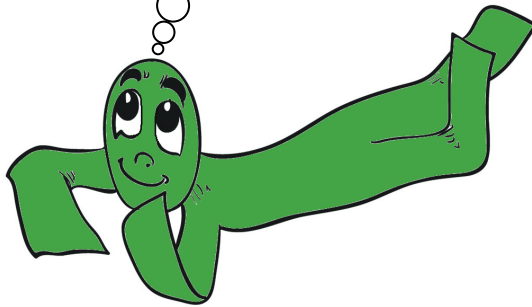
exiterik.com

This book is dedicated to all the South Africans I know and love, and to anyone who has, like me, struggled with being different.



This book belongs to:

Life would be SO
much easier, if only
I could be NORMAL...



When you see ↓ it means the **bold word** before it is either local **lingo**↓ or a word in a different language. The definition is at the bottom of the page (*and again at the back of the book*) like this:

→ **lingo** - special words used by people in a certain region



1

BEEEEEEEEP!

Exit Erik is trapped in an airplane high in the sky. *How much longer until we reach Cape Town?* he wonders.

He left London almost *eleven* hours ago!

For most of that time, he has been curled in a small ball, hiding inside an empty – and very smelly – old running shoe. Cautiously, he peers out the top, desperate to stretch and move around.

Slowly, he raises his little green body into the space below the row of seats. As the coolness of the air-conditioned plane rolls over him, he pauses to smile. *Ah, that's better.* Stretching up higher, he slips his flat green body onto the orange life jacket stored beneath the seat above

him. Sliding along, he stretches out until he is draped over the edges of two flotation devices. Utterly bored, he stares down at the blue carpet. His eyes glaze over...

I just wish I could have bought a ticket and watched movies like NORMAL people...

His vacant stare drifts from the crumbs on the carpet... to a pair of dirty boots... to a couple of legs... to the window up above...



...HOW MUCH LONGER

Suddenly, with no concern for why he must stay hidden, Exit Erik gives a powerful push. He slides off the life jackets and onto the floor. Springing up into his full child-like size, he presses himself flat against the curved wall of the airplane and looks out the window.

'Oh, wow!' he gasps. 'We must be landing soon...'

A sharp intake of a breath behind him spins him around and brings him face-to-face with a young woman who had, until now, been happily reading a magazine.

Shocked by his unusual appearance, a tiny squeak escapes her lips. Her eyes bulge in terror and slowly roll

upwards. As her head falls limp against the grey leather seat, Exit Erik is instantly aware of his mistake!



Staring at the unconscious woman, he panics and drops to the floor. He scurries away, dodging sock feet and empty shoes for half the length of the plane...

'Ouch!' he whimpers, rubbing his sore head.

Noticing the crack beneath the door he has just hit, Exit Erik slips through and sprawls out in relief on the other side.

'What have I done?' he mumbles, trembling. 'Am I really so scary? I just want to be a tourist...'

A man's shocked gasp fills the air. Startled, Exit Erik looks up. A uniformed pilot is staring down at him. Stunned by the sight of the flat, green – and talking! – creature lying on the carpet near his feet, the pilot's hands drop from the flight controls and accidentally flick a switch.

The cockpit fills with alarms.

B...BB...BBBEEEEEP...

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

BEEP!

The airplane drops in the sky. On the other side of the door, the cabin fills with the startled screams of panicked passengers.

The plane is out of control!

2

Toxic Tracey

Exit Erik escapes back under the door.

I have caused enough trouble, he decides. I just need some place to hide!

Dashing down the narrow aisle between rows of panicked passengers, he comes to a dead end at the back of the plane. He looks left. He looks right. All he can see is a wall of food carts! *What now?*

Glancing back, he sees a flight attendant rushing down the aisle towards him. *Oh no!*

Desperate, he looks up. But there's no way out. He looks down. *Yes!* Slipping through the gap around a trap door in the floor, he falls through darkness.

'Ahhhhhhhhhhhh!'

He lands on something hard and springs instantly upright, glancing cautiously all around, squinting in an effort to see.

'Wooooowwww...what is this?'

He is sitting on a never-ending sea of suitcases.

Amidst the growl of engines, Exit Erik crawls over the mountain of luggage. He finds one with an empty front pouch, opens the zipper and slips inside. As the plane seems to steady its course, he huddles in the pouch and waits. But he is consumed with sadness...



I don't want to HURT them. I just want to be a TOURIST...

THUD!

Exit Erik cringes in shock.

The plane's wheels have hit the tarmac.

Thump. Tumble. BUMP! smack. THUNK!

As the cargo hold is unloaded and suitcases are tossed from place to place, Exit Erik flinches with each bump and tumble until – *finally* – his suitcase is collected and wheeled into a frenzy of noise in the arrivals hall.

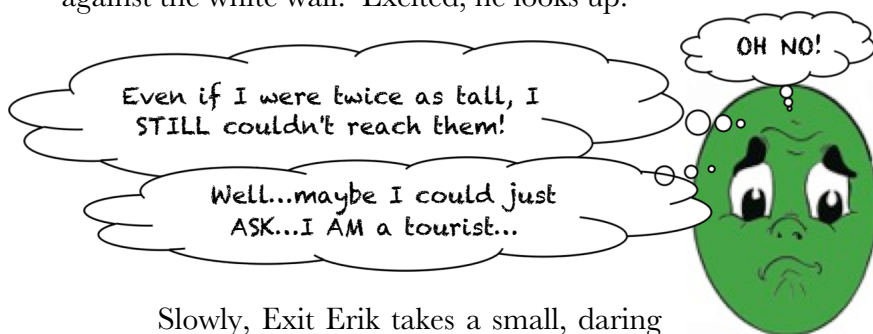
Carefully, he peers out from the top of the pouch at the sea of people rolling their suitcases in all directions.

What now? he wonders.

A moment later, he spots a small tourist booth where a large, dark-skinned woman is handing out maps.

A map! That's it! That's what I need! If maps worked for the workers at my warehouse, thinks Exit Erik, they will surely work for me, too! I just have to get one...

Waiting for his suitcase to near the booth, he hops from the pouch and dashes across the large white tiles. Wanting to hide and not cause any more trouble, Exit Erik slides into the side of the counter and presses his back against the white wall. Excited, he looks up.



Slowly, Exit Erik takes a small, daring step away from the wall. He turns and looks up. In his bravest voice, he asks, 'May I please have a map?'

'Certainly,' chirps the woman, bending over the counter to hand a map to the child she expects to see.

'Eish!' ↓ she gasps, startled.

As her hand flies up to cover her gaping mouth,

➔ **eish** - (*aysh*) Wow! Oh my!

she drops the map. It bounces off Exit Erik's head and lands on the floor beside him.

'Thank you,' he says politely, and then leans over to pick it up.

'**Tokoloshe!**' ↓ gasps the woman before she falls onto the counter.

And then she hits the floor.

THUMP!
THUMP!

'Oh no,' mumbles Exit Erik. 'Not again!'

Frantic to hide, he looks around. Seeing a door, he bolts across the shiny tiles and slides under, popping up on the other side in a small dark cleaning cupboard.

'That's better,' he sighs. Relieved to be alone, he sits in the middle of the room and opens his map. 'Now, let's see...where am I?'



Hey **boet!** ↓ You're glowing! I want to glow! How are you doing that?

Startled by an unexpected female voice, Exit Erik lowers the map and glances around. A moment later, he spots the talking skull and crossbones on the container beside him.

'Oh, wow!' he gasps. 'Uh...hi there.'

-
- ➔ **tokoloshe** - (*TOH-koh-lohsh*) evil spirit (*like hili*)
 - ➔ **boet** - (*beut*) brother / male friend (*like bru and bra*)



What does she mean I'm glowing? wonders Exit Erik, looking down to inspect his body. 'So I am,' he agrees. 'Well, I guess it's because we exit sign men always glow in the dark. Hi. My name is Exit Erik. What's yours?'

'Hi. I'm Toxic Tracey. It's nice having company. But **sho!**↓ How can you travel around looking like that and not scare people? They'd drop dead if *I* started walking around!'

'Actually, I *do* scare people,' replies Exit Erik. 'All the time. That's why I'm hiding in here.'

'**Ag,**↓ **shame**↓ man. I'm real sorry about that. So why don't you just make yourself look more like them? You know...try to fit in...look a bit normal. You could start by wearing some clothes,' chuckles Toxic Tracey.

'That's a great idea!' exclaims Exit Erik. But...' He pauses. 'I'd still be flat.'

'Skinny,' corrects Toxic Tracey. 'Really skinny.'

'And green,' reminds Exit Erik.

'**Ag,**↓ some makeup can fix that. Or paint. See that bag in the corner? See what you can find in there.'

Exit Erik thinks for a moment and then lays down his map. 'Okay,' he shrugs. Rummaging inside the bag, he puts on the only thing he can find. Turning to Toxic Tracey, he holds up his arms. 'How about this?'

'**HA-ha-ha-ha!**' explodes Toxic Tracey, full of amusement. 'I sure have needed a good laugh!'

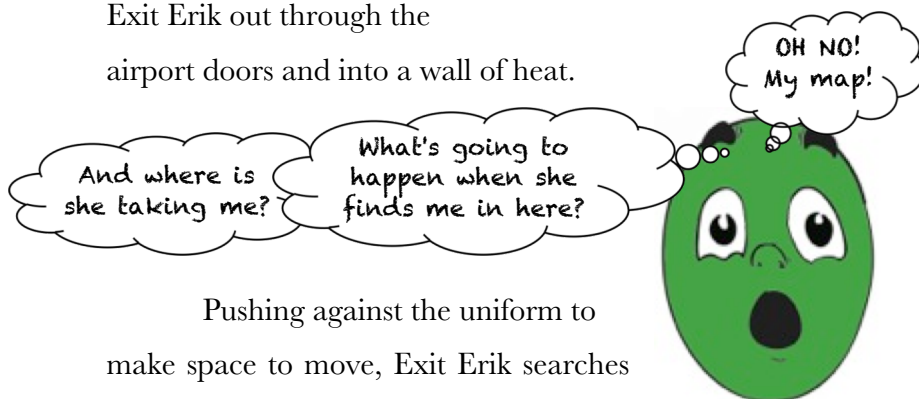
-
- ➔ **sho** - (*shoh*) wow
 - ➔ **ag** - (*ach*) ah / ah, man / oh no
 - ➔ **shame** - that's too bad

Standing beside the mop bucket, Exit Erik swims in a gigantic pink dress that pools on the floor around him. He looks at his new friend. 'It's a bit big, isn't it?'

'I don't think...' giggles Toxic Tracey. But then, hearing a key turn in the lock, she stops. 'Oh no!' she gasps. 'Quick! Hide!'

Exit Erik shakes off the dress and dives into the plastic bag. A large, dark-skinned woman in a light blue janitor's uniform enters and flicks a switch on the wall. The cupboard floods with light. Seeing the dress on the floor, she grumbles, scoops it up, and changes into it.

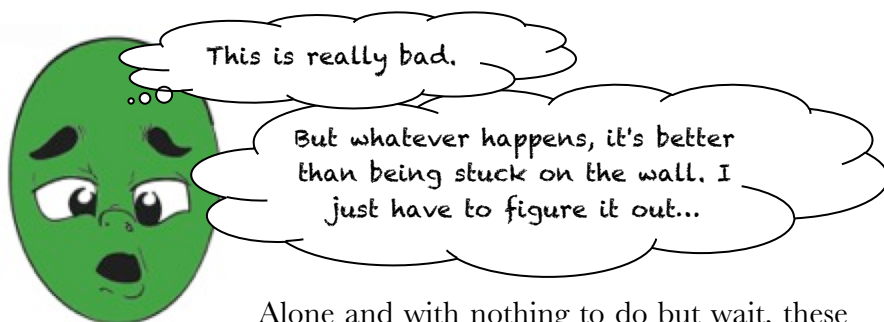
Whisking the bag off the floor, she stuffs her uniform inside, squashing Exit Erik into the bottom of the bag. She steps from the closet and into the bustling noise. Flicking off the light, she locks the door and joins the crowd, carrying Exit Erik out through the airport doors and into a wall of heat.



Pushing against the uniform to make space to move, Exit Erik searches along the sides of his plastic prison for a hole. Soon, he finds a small puncture. Poking the corner of

his arm through, he makes it bigger. Then he plasters his eye to it and looks out.

The woman steps into an old mini bus taxi that is crammed with more dark-skinned people. They laugh and joke in a language he cannot understand. A moment later, as the bag is set in the woman's lap and his viewing hole to the outside world is covered up, he begins to worry.



Alone and with nothing to do but wait, these thoughts roll around in Exit Erik's mind, over and over again...

Some
time
Later...

3

Where am I?

SMACK! Swish. SMACK! Swish.

Exit Erik is roused from his troubled thoughts when the plastic bag sways to and fro, hitting the woman's leg as she walks. He presses his face once more to the viewing hole and stares out.

THIS is South Africa?

Shack after shack, it's all the same. Walls are a patchwork of rusty metal, cardboard, wooden planks, piles of bricks, and strips of fabric. The materials are all fastened together, as though trying to hold each other up. Sitting on

top of them all, wavy metal rooftops are held in place by old tires and bricks.

I don't know what I expected, thinks Exit Erik, *but it wasn't this! It's nothing like London – or any other place I've seen on any poster, ever!*

The woman weaves through a maze of narrow alleys between the shacks. Her sandaled feet stir the sandy pathways into a cloud of dust. Ducking beneath lines of laundry, she waves to friends and dodges barefoot children who chase one another. Eventually, she arrives at an old wooden door, which creaks on its hinges as she opens it. Stepping inside, she sets the bag on the floor.

After waiting a **LOOOOOONG** time for silence, Exit Erik finally pokes his head out to investigate.

Along one wall of the tiny room, an old mattress sits on layers of newspapers that line the earthen floor. Along the opposite wall, a pile of dented pots and pans teeter under a small sink. *There's nowhere to hide.* Turning to look outside, Exit Erik watches with curiosity as the woman builds a fire beneath a large black pot that sits in the sand on three short legs. She adds ingredients, hums happily and stirs with a long wooden spoon.

Oh no! If I don't get out of here, I might end up in there!
What should I do now? Where can I hide?



Slipping from the bag, Exit Erik tiptoes silently to the door. Peering out, he looks in all directions, hoping to find a good place to hide. But all he sees are shacks. *Oh no! What now?* Cautiously, he sticks his head out further, stretching for a better look. Beyond the children kicking a

ball in the sand, he sees a field of tall grass baking brown in the sun. *That's my way out!* he decides. *I'll hide in the grass until everyone goes to sleep. Then I'll escape!*

Without thinking his plan through any further, he impulsively drops to the ground and scrunches into a ball. He pushes off with his hands and rolls towards the children, hoping to look like just another ball in the play area. He is focused on the line of swaying grass...

BAM!

Exit Erik rolls out of control and bounces through the sand alongside the ball that just hit him...

...until a large sandaled foot stops them both.

Uh oh!

Towering over Exit Erik, an annoyed man shouts at the children. His angry fist pounds the air as he levers back a strong, hairy leg and...

KERRRR-POW!

The ball is gone.

Exit Erik is startled out of form. He loosens into what looks like a wad of crumpled green paper and then freezes in fear, unable to move. He simply stares at the huge feet. He is still staring when a large calloused hand reaches towards him...

OH NO!

Snatched up, he is scrunched closed by the large hand and carried away. Unable to see, his fears mount. When the hand slowly releases, he is staring down into a pile of smelly rubbish spilling from an old oil drum.

SCHWICK!

A match is struck. It sizzles loudly beside him. Instantly, Exit Erik remembers the explosion at his warehouse. He remembers that fire is dangerous.

The glowing hot flame approaches...



Exit Erik panics!

He expands to full size – right in the middle of the man's strong hand. He kicks off with his legs and flies through the air. Touching the ground, his thin little feet churn up the sand and he dashes away.

Behind him, a fire explodes in the oil drum.

Frightened, Exit Erik surges forward with all his might. He tears through narrow alleys, weaves between colourful shacks and dashes past people who become terrified at the sight of him.

'**Hili!**'↓ they scream, whisking their children out of his path. '**Tokoloshe!**'↓

WHAM! Doors are slammed. Walls shudder and rooftops rattle. Curtains are drawn. Everyone vanishes!

'I won't hurt you!' yells Exit Erik. His little legs whip around a corner, spinning up a cloud of dust behind him. 'I'm just a tour...'

SMACK!

Exit Erik slams into a brick wall. He bounces off and stumbles through the sand. Hitting a second wall, he falls flat on his face. 'I'm just a tourist...' he whimpers.

Then he p a s s e s o u t .

-
- ➔ **hili** - (*HILL-lee*) evil spirit (*like tokoloshe*)
- ➔ **tokoloshe** - (*TOH-koh-lohsh*) evil spirit (*like hili*)

4

Prisoner

Exit Erik's back is burning!

Snapping his eyes open, he is startled to see – *mere inches from his face* – a wrinkled old man leering at him. In an instant, Exit Erik is terrified! He turns to run...

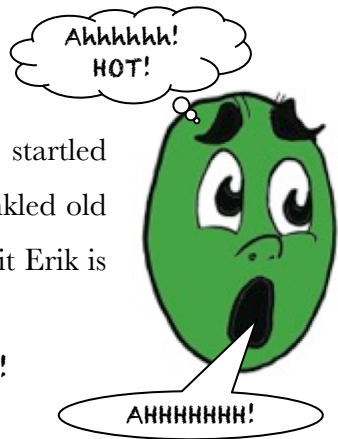
...but he can't!

Exit Erik...

...**CANNOT MOVE!**

What's going on? He looks around. Spotting the problem, his eyes bulge in horror. **WHAT!?** He is stuck to a hot metal wall with strips of tape!

Exit Erik is in
VERY BIG trouble!



'Please! Take me off this wall!' he begs. 'It hurts! Please! Really, it hurts!'

But the old man ignores his request. Instead, he speaks in quiet words that Exit Erik cannot understand. He first points to an empty plate on the earthen floor, and then to his stomach, which is covered by an old thin shirt that hangs in tattered rags.

'Please!' Exit Erik continues to beg. 'I'm in pain. Please, you must help me.'

But the man shakes his head, ignoring the plea. He steps away and crosses the tiny room, which is lit by the small bulb hanging overhead and the thin trickles of sunlight filtering through many holes in the walls. Stooping over an old saggy cardboard box, the man collects a small square plastic container – the kind used for carrying sandwiches. As his back is turned, Exit Erik squirms, desperate to get free.

But it's no use. He simply is not strong enough. It has been far too long since he has recharged. Growing weaker by the moment, Exit Erik finally gives up and hangs on the wall, watching in defeat as the man returns with the container.

'Please,' begs Exit Erik once more, but quietly this time. 'I'm just a tourist. Please let me go. I don't want to

hurt you...!' Exit Erik stops speaking when he notices the man reach out to peel the tape away from one leg.



As the tape is removed from both legs, Exit Erik floods with relief. But that feeling quickly turns to terror

when the man grabs hold of both legs and swiftly crams them into the small clear sandwich box.

In one smooth movement, Exit Erik's arms are released and the rest of him is shoved inside. Before he knows what's happening, the lid is slammed on top and snapped closed on all four sides. Stuck inside, Exit Erik stares out through the thick plastic, utterly dumbfounded.

But...but...

As his situation slowly registers, panic sets in. He begins to squirm inside the small plastic prison. With all his might, he battles to escape. He presses hard against the lid. He kicks against the sides.

But nothing works.

The wrinkled old man raises the box up to his face. Like a curious child inspecting a trapped insect, he peers at Exit Erik through the clear plastic walls.

'Let me go!' begs Exit Erik. 'Please! I won't hurt you! I'm just a tourist! Please! Let me out!'

But it's no use. The man is not interested in what Exit Erik wants. Instead, he sets the container inside a tatty old plastic shopping bag and opens the rickety door of his shack. He peers outside and then steps into the sunshine, closing the door behind him.



A FEW
MINUTES
LATER ...

When the container is pulled from the bag, the lid is unsnapped. Exit Erik is grabbed and shoved through a wall of metal bars. The old man forces him towards shelves full of food, keeping a firm grip on his arm.



Utterly confused, Exit Erik looks to the man, who is repeating the same gesture over and over again. He points to the food, then he points to his mouth. *Oh!*

Everything is suddenly clear!



I think he's just hungry.

He just needs my help.


Exit Erik is an exit sign man. His job, for all of his life, has been to help people.

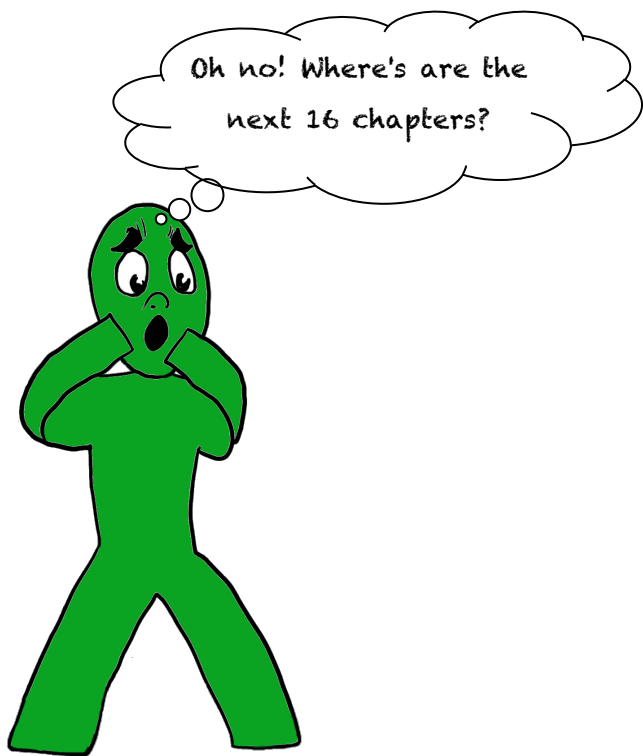
If this man is hungry and needs my help, he thinks, then it's my job to look after him. It doesn't matter if he tried to hurt me, or has held me against my will...

Happy to do what he can, Exit Erik grabs food and passes it through the bars. The man stuffs all he is given into his plastic sack. Exit Erik smiles at the bulging bag, pleased he could help. But his smile disappears when the man reaches for the small plastic container.

He's going to put me back in there! realizes Exit Erik. *He's never going to let me go!*

I'm his P R I S
!
R E N





Oh no! Where's are the
next 16 chapters?

Visit
www.exiterik.com
to find out where to get the book
and enjoy the rest of the story!

