

# THIRTY DAYS

by

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**(for NaNoWriMo 2010)**

I am writing 'Thirty Days' for National Novel Writing Month 2010. I am also writing it to raise money for charity. The specific charity that I want to help is St Luke's Hospice (Harrow and Brent). They provide care and support to terminally ill patients and their families from the Harrow and Brent areas of north London, regardless of their background. In May 2009 my father sadly passed away, but his final days were made more comfortable by St Luke's, and I'm grateful for the care that they gave him and the support that they gave to my family. And so I would like to raise some money for them as my way of saying thanks. You can find out more about St Luke's via their website at [www.stlukes-hospice.org](http://www.stlukes-hospice.org)

If you would like to sponsor me you can do so via my Just Giving page at [www.justgiving.com/karlsgreen](http://www.justgiving.com/karlsgreen) I and St Luke's will be grateful for anything that you're able to give.

And finally, I've also set up a page on Facebook about the novel where I'll be posting any news about what I'm doing, and you can find it at <http://bit.ly/9OfC6p>

This file, and all other chapters, will be made available on my website at <http://www.karlsgreen.co.uk/thirtydays> You may freely distribute this file subject to the following two conditions:

1. You do not alter the file in any way, shape, or form.
2. You do not charge anyone for access to the file.

**DAY EIGHTEEN**

**THE CAPTAIN'S DAUGHTER**

*It was two years before the philosopher saw her again. When he did he decided that he would raise these questions with her. This was not a decision that he took lightly. He was aware of what the repercussions of raising these matters with her might be. If his whole universe depended on her mind, upsetting that balance by addressing her directly could result in devastating consequences for his universe, but he felt that it was still important to know the truth.*

*When she heard him talk of these matters she was both amazed and surprised. She had thought that the people that she met in this world were just parts of her own imagination, people who would be unable to work out the truth of this reality. And yet here stood before her a man who had done just that. The philosopher went on to describe the universe that he had created within his own mind, and she was amazed further.*

*Rather than rock the balance of the universe, she decided that she would be truthful with him. She told him that her reality was the true reality, as least as far as she was aware it was. It did not exist within the mind of another being. She explained what had happened to her in that reality that led her to retreat into this one.*

*The philosopher asked her if this universe would end once she returned to her reality. She assured him that it would not, that she would make sure that it would exist for as long as she did. She accepted the fact that she now had a responsibility to this universe.*

*But the fact that some of its people had now become self-aware led her to think of some intriguing possibilities...*

## The Apocolynium – XVIII

Prion, Sarna, Parto, Gramshaw, and the Drydonians reached the border with Allana early on the morning of the eighteenth day. They had arisen from their camp at dawn that day, knowing that they were only a few hours away. The seventeenth day had been peaceful. They had good weather accompanying them on their march. But as they got ever closer to their destination an increasing sense of foreboding came over them all.

Gramshaw in particular felt it very strongly. He felt that what lay before them was going to be a task that was more difficult than anything that they had faced before. That had to be the case if the fate of not just one but two worlds depended on it, and possibly more worlds as well. He had seen with his own eyes what Lisa's powers were, but he believed that she was now badly in need of their help. And he wanted to do everything that he was able to do to give her the support that she needed.

The guards at the Allanan border couldn't quite believe their eyes when they saw the large crowd of people walking towards them. At first they thought that, unbelievably, Drydonia was coming

to invade them. But as the crowd got closer they saw that they were civilians, with women and children amongst them. They couldn't understand why they were all coming this way. They thought that maybe there had been some terrible disaster in Drydonia, and they were refugees fleeing this disaster. But if that were true, why hadn't they heard of it sooner, or seen some evidence of it?

The crowd slowed down to a halt not far from the border, and then five people continued on to the border itself. The head guard got a further surprise when he saw that one of these five people was Prince Gratson himself.

'Hail, Allana!' said the prince, as he stopped just by the border.

The head guard went out to meet him. 'Greetings, Drydonia. What is it that brings you to our border?'

'We have been sent here on a mission by a power that is greater than ourselves. We need to escort these people to the port at Nilona, so that they can board a ship to Returia. Once we have seen them safely off we will return to Drydon.'

'Who was it who sent you on this mission?'

'You have heard of our legends, no doubt?'

'Yes, indeed I have.'

'Our siren sounded and we were summoned. We were instructed to complete a task, which we did, and then we were further instructed to accompany these people to Nilona.'

Gramshaw could see that the head guard was still uncertain as to what to do, and so he said, 'We have been sent on a mission to assist Lisa.'

The head guard was taken aback by this, and then said, 'Lisa? You mean she has come back?'

'She did, but she was taken away again, by a Tricerian by the name of Welt. He intends great harm to Allana, but if he is allowed to succeed then the whole of Pyna will be at risk, along with another world called the Earth.'

'Earth...?' The head guard had heard this name before. His father was a theologian, and that was a name that occasionally appeared in the ancient texts. However, very few other people had heard of it, and so he was surprised to hear Gramshaw mention it. That, combined with the fact that Drydonia had never meant any harm to Allana previously and Prince Gratson had a reputation as a man who could be trusted, convinced him that he should allow these people in. He turned to the other guards and commanded them to, 'Open the gates!'

The prince bowed his head and said, 'I thank you.'

'I wish you well on your mission.'

The party and the prince then passed through the gates, followed by the rest of the Drydonians. Gramshaw knew that they were now one step further to finding out what their fate was going to be.

Within two hours they arrived at Nilona. Gramshaw's sense of trepidation grew with every step they took towards the town. The town itself fell silent as they saw everyone arriving in slow procession. They recognised Prince Gratson, and so they knew that something important was happening.

They made their way directly to the port. When they arrived the captains of the various ships gathered together, they instinctively knew that they had come to see them.

The prince approached them and said, 'We require a ship to take this party of four across the sea to Returia. We will be unable to pay you, but it is vitally important that they get there. We have been commanded by a power greater than ourselves. Who amongst you will be able to take them?'

One of the captains, by the name of Friction, immediately said, 'I can.' He was already heading to Returia, and was planning to leave shortly. It was no trouble to him to take on four more passengers, and do a service to a prince at the same time.

'I thank you, sir.'

'It's not a problem, although they'll have to board straight away as we're about to set off. I need to be in Returia by tomorrow.'

'That will be more than fine.'

The party bid farewell to the prince, and thanked the captain, who then led them to his ship. Once they were on board they stood by the side and looked out towards the prince and the rest of the Drydonians. Prion then said, 'Prince Gratson and Drydonia, you have now completed your duty to us. We now set off to Returia on the next stage of our quest. We thank you for what you have done for us. Return now to Drydonia, and live in peace, and hope that we, and Lisa, can successfully complete the tasks that lay before us.'

The prince and the rest of the Drydonians bowed their heads. They spent the rest of that day in Nilona, and the residents of the town took them in for the night. They also came to an agreement whereby the residents of Nilona were welcome to come to Drydonia and spend some time in the crystal cave if they wished to do so.

As Captain Friction promised, the ship left Nilona for Returia very shortly afterwards. He showed the party to a room with four beds where they could stay that night, and said that they were free to explore the ship during the voyage. He advised that they should be arriving in Returia first thing tomorrow morning.

Prion and Sarna decided to stay in the room. Parto decided to give them some space, and so he went out on the deck to watch the town and the coast recede into the distance. Gramshaw decided to wander about the ship, to see what he could see.

He was the outsider in their group. When he had met them Prion and Sarna had already been married for a few years, and Parto, Sarna's brother, had been travelling with them for a while. Whilst they were welcoming to him, he always felt a little left out of things. He would never quite fully fit in with the rest of them.

He envied the relationship that Prion and Sarna had. For his part, Gramshaw had never had much luck with members of the opposite sex. He had felt close to one girl from his past, although this had only lasted for a month. He had met the girl concerned at a celebration in Allana on the anniversary of Allana's victory over Triceria. He was instantly smitten with her. He felt that he had a connection with her.

But she was only in Allana temporarily, working for a local shipping company. He saw her several times during the month. Every time he got to know more about her, and he liked what he found out. He liked her. He really believed that they might have been able to form a relationship and have a life together, if they had been given more time to get to know each other.

He never knew how she felt about him. He had never got the chance to ask her, although he had deeply longed to. The month flew by, and before he knew it, it was time for her to leave. She was going back to Yentalica, which lay on the other side of the great ocean, and she had no plans to return to Allana any time in the near future. He told her that if she ever was in Allana again then she should seek him out, and she said she would. He hugged her when she set off back home, and he watched her leave. It broke his heart to see her go. He wondered what would have happened if she had been able to stay and they had been able to spend more time together. As things stood, he hadn't seen her since, although they had exchanged a few letters. These letters were simply describing the events of their lives, and they were infrequent.

Ever since then he had tended to keep himself to himself. He didn't think that he would ever find another girl like her. He had resigned himself to spending the rest of his life as a bachelor.

Today, that all changed.

As he was walking through the ship he saw a girl walking towards him, and she had one of the prettiest faces that he had ever seen. They stopped in front of each other, and she smiled at him, and he found himself smiling back. 'Hi,' she said, 'You're one of the four people from Drydonia, aren't you?'

'Yes, although I am actually Allanan.'

‘Oh right, you must have been travelling around a bit recently.’

‘You don’t know the half of it. Last week we were in Practor for a while.’

‘Practor? Seriously? And you’ve come all the way to Drydonia since then?’

‘Yes, but we didn’t exactly travel here via conventional methods.’ He then went on to describe everything that they had been through over the past eighteen days, and she listened attentively. He learnt that her name was Serenna. She was the captain’s oldest daughter, and she had been travelling with him for the past year. Their home was in Nilona, but they rarely got to see it as they were always so busy on the ship. But she liked working on the ship. She liked being at sea. She said she found it calming, and Gramshaw had to agree that it was. He rarely got to see the sea, but he was always happier when he did for some reason.

She then offered to show him her favourite part of travelling at sea, but, to do so, they would have to wait until nightfall. She told him to come and meet her on the deck after dinner, and he agreed to do so.

For the rest of that day he was in a dream. He was feeling it again, the feelings that he never thought he would feel again. He was utterly enchanted with Serenna.

He hardly spoke at all during dinner. Sarna asked him, ‘Is everything OK?’

‘Oh,’ he said, coming out of his thoughts, ‘Yes, yes. Everything is fine. Everything is absolutely fine.’ A smile spread across his face, and Sarna felt that it was best if she didn’t probe any further.

After the meal he made his way up onto the deck. Serenna was up there waiting for him, and they were alone. ‘Look,’ she said, pointing up to the sky.

The sky was filled with stars, and Pyna’s moon shining brightly in the cloudless sky. Everything was crystal clear, with the band of stars that showed most of the stars of their galaxy streaking across the sky. This is what you call the Milky Way, which you are also able to see from Earth.

She placed her arm around him. It was unexpected, but most certainly not unwelcome. She looked up at him and smiled, and he smiled back.

He felt an overwhelming sense of hope. He felt that if he should ever return from the task that lay before them, he knew exactly where he wanted to be.

They then kissed. They remained on the deck throughout the night, watching the stars, feeling the cooling breeze against their skin, and listening to the sounds of the sea...