

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

If you would like to sponsor me you can do so via my Just Giving page at 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.
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DAY FIFTEEN

A NEW EVIL

The Philosopher met her on many occasions. She had helped him out with several of his problems. But he soon came to realise that she would always disappear shortly after she had helped him, only to reappear again once he needed assistance with something else.

The people of his world believed that angels could come and assist the living, but he didn't feel that she was an angel. She didn't perform miracles, she only gave advice.

She also seemed to be extremely knowledgeable about their world, and its place within the universe. She would describe other worlds and galaxies in precise detail. These things had only been theorised on his world, and not conclusively proven.

And then, one day, when he asked her how she knew so much, she simply said that sometimes she feels like she has the whole universe living inside her head. She herself barely even noticed herself saying it, intending it as a light hearted comment to a figment of her own imagination. She did not yet know that he was self-aware.

But this comment got him thinking...

The Apocolynium – XV

On the fifteenth day I became aware of who the figure that was stalking Steve and Natasha was, and it is indeed worrying. Steve and Natasha are most certainly not safe, dear reader, and we should all be afraid.

I saw the man again early in the morning, in Belmont Circle, outside Steve's flat. I was unable to see where he himself had spent the previous night. But I saw him this morning. It was a very cold morning, and he was simply standing outside Steve's flat, watching it, his face expressionless.

Inside the flat Steve and Natasha were asleep, and weren't planning to get up for a while. No more for them are the tiring Monday mornings that so many other people throughout the world are having to endure. They slept peacefully and dreamlessly, believing themselves to be completely safe from harm, their battles all behind them.

Naomi had decided to return to her flat in Kilburn, still not certain what she was going to do next with her life. Lisa was still at Steve's flat. Today she felt that she was going to have to decide what exactly to do with Welt and the Dragon Keeper. She would have to take Welt back to Pyna, and the Dragon Keeper to another world where she could do no harm. But she knew that neither would be willing to go, and yet go they must.

But Lisa didn't want to leave the Earth herself yet. She liked it here, she always had done. True, she was aware that she could easily return once Welt and the Dragon Keeper had been dealt with, but she was all too aware that she could easily get distracted by someone having a

problem that she could provide assistance with, and that she wouldn't be able to resist helping them. It's not that she didn't want to help others, it was just that she had only returned to this reality two weeks ago, and, having dealt with her first crisis, she felt like she wanted a break, to relax, and to spend some more time with Steve and Natasha, to help them to settle into their new life a bit more. She knew that they were happy now, but with new powers came new responsibilities, and she wanted to ensure that they were aware of those responsibilities before she herself had to move on.

She was completely oblivious to the man outside on the street, watching the flat. She could detect nothing unusual in the air. And yet she still had a nagging feeling in her gut that there was still more work to be done on the Earth.

The man stood outside the flat for hours, before he walked away, and then I lost him.

I picked him up again at Naomi's house. Again, he was just standing out in the street, watching it. Inside Naomi was going over the things that she had accumulated during her human life. She had a vast collection of books, covering most genres and a vast array of authors. She had loved to read as a human, and she was still fascinated by books now. And there were still so many that she hadn't had time to read. She would often buy books, with the good intention of getting around to reading them one day, but she bought far more than she ever would have had time to read. She thought that she could perhaps stay here on the Earth a while and catch up on some of them, if there wasn't any other pressing work for her, that is.

She had spoken to the office that she worked in – she had worked for a publishing company. They had been concerned by her recent absence, and had been trying to contact her. She apologised and explained that she had had an accident – nothing too serious, but she had been in hospital for a while, wasn't able to get to a phone for ages, and, once she had, didn't have the number for the office. They weren't overly thrilled by this excuse, saying that she could have found a way for someone to get a message through to them, but they did at least buy her story, and then asked how she was doing now. She said that she was still feeling a bit sore, and was currently on crutches, and so wouldn't be in work for a while. They told her to take it easy – and to make sure that she sent them a doctor's note to cover her absence. She wasn't concerned by this, getting a fake note wasn't going to be a problem for her.

Of course, she knew that, in time at least, she would have to give up that job. Sooner or later she would be sent away on another assignment. But, whilst she was still here, she still wanted something to do. It wasn't that she needed the money – again, getting money wasn't going to be a problem for her. It was that she genuinely enjoyed the work, and she liked the

people that she worked with. When she did eventually have to go away she would really, genuinely, miss all of them. And so she wanted to make her life that she had built on the Earth last for as long as she could.

But she didn't want to go back to work right away. She needed some time to recover from what had recently happened, and she would need to go and see Ian. There was something about everything that had happened that was troubling her, and she needed to speak to him about it. She decided that today would be the day that she did that.

The man outside watched her house right up until she left it. He then started to follow her. She was completely oblivious to his existence.

She made her way to Kilburn Station, using her Oyster card to get through the barrier. The man had no Oyster card – he simply placed his hand in front of the reader and the barrier opened for him.

She got onto a southbound Jubilee Line train, and he got onto the same carriage, sitting quite close to her, but not so close as to be obvious that he was following her.

She stayed on the train until Baker Street, where she got off and made her way through the station to the Bakerloo Line. Again, the man followed her and was not noticed by her. She boarded a southbound train, and, again, he sat on the same carriage as her.

Towards the end of the line there weren't that many people left on the carriage. This was quite normal, and Naomi didn't give the man a second thought as she got off of the train at Elephant & Castle. She was completely oblivious to the fact that he had followed her all the way from her house.

She made her way out of the station, and then on to the cafe where she knew Ian would be, for that's where he always was. He smiled as he saw her walking in. She went up to him and they hugged once more.

The man who had been following her did not go into the cafe. He just stood across the street from it, watching it as he had watched Steve's flat and Naomi's house.

'We did it Ian,' Naomi said. 'We defeated the Dragon Keeper!'

'Yes, indeed you did. You've done well, and the Earth is safe, at least for now.'

'Do you think it could be in danger again?'

'As long as it has its power it will always be in danger. Why do you think I stay here? I can assure you that it's certainly not for the coffee! I will be here to keep an eye on the place, and make sure that nothing bad happens to it. Or at least, nothing too bad. These humans may still end up messing the place up all by themselves.'

'So, what happens next? Do I have to go now, or can I stay for a bit?'

‘Of course you can stay! There’s no need for you to rush off anywhere. This universe is safe for now. I don’t think it would have a problem if you have yourself a break.’

‘There has been one thing that had been worrying me, though. Steve, one of the two halves, had been attacked by the Dragon Keeper, and was incapacitated at his home. He then started to get text messages on his phone. One of them said “Destiny Will Fall”, and then another one was directed at me, it addressed me directly, and told me to go outside! And it was just as well that I did – because of what the Dragon Keeper had done to Steve, Lisa was unable to locate him, or me whilst I stood near him. It was only once I went outside that she was able to find us, and from that we were able to unite the two halves before the Dragon Keeper could get to Natasha, who’s the other half.

‘But those words worry me, Ian. We all know what “Destiny Will Fall” means, and whoever was sending these messages, they were directing them at me.’

Ian thought for a moment and then said, ‘Try not to worry about them too much. The only message that was directed directly at you was the one telling you to go outside. And from what I gather if you hadn’t done that then we wouldn’t be sitting here now having this conversation. But, yes, you’re right, those words are worrying. Were any other messages like that received by anyone?’

‘Yes. Steve said that he’d had a few more like it before that one came, and Natasha’s had some as well.’

‘So, both of the two halves have received messages telling them that “Destiny Will Fall”. Interesting... It’s very worrying, but still interesting. Yes, you should definitely stay here for a while. I fear that there may be some more work to be done here first.’

Naomi was afraid when she heard this, but, deep down, she had to admit that she was expecting as much...

The man stayed outside of the cafe the whole time that Naomi was in there. When she left he didn’t follow her. He just stood there, and continued to watch...

After seeing Ian, Naomi decided to go to Harrow and see Lisa again. She was alone in Steve’s flat. Steve and Natasha had decided to go out and find a cafe somewhere where they could get on with their novels. She still hadn’t decided what to do about the Dragon Keeper and Welt. She knew that she was stalling, but she thought that she still had plenty of time.

She was surprised to see Naomi again so soon, ‘What brings you back here again?’

I went to see Ian. I told him about the messages that Steve and Natasha got, telling them that “Destiny Will Fall.” I have a bad feeling about this Lisa, and I think he does too. He thinks that I should stay on Earth for a while, and that there may be more work for us to do here.’

‘Yes, I was worried about that too. It was very odd that Steve and Natasha were sent those messages. And whoever it was who sent them saved the world by doing so. But the fact that we don’t know who it was, that is a worry.’

‘So, what do you think we should do now?’

‘I really don’t know. I’m not sure if there’s even anything that we can do. It may well be that nothing more happens, that whoever sent those messages did so simply to get our attention, so that they could get you away from Steve in time...’

‘Do you really think that’s all it could be?’

Lisa thought for a moment. She really did hope that that was all it was. That it was nothing more than someone trying to help them. But deep down she knew that there had to be more to it than that. ‘Destiny Will Fall.’ She knew all too well what those words meant, and, dear reader, believe me when I tell you that those words are not to be taken lightly.

She said, ‘No, I’m afraid not. There is more to it than that. I really hoped that this would all be over. I hope it still is. But we need to be alert. Unless this person sends us another message, this may just be a case of waiting and seeing what happens.’

‘Lisa, I’m scared. I just want to relax, you know? I was here a long time as a human, sent here to wait to bump into Steve. I’ve done what I was sent here to do. That’s all I was placed here for! They never said that there may be other work for me to do here afterwards! Surely they would have known if anything else was going to happen afterwards. And, if they did, why wouldn’t they have told me, and Ian? Why are we being left out like this? I don’t like this not knowing!’

‘I know how you feel. You know what they’re like, they only tell you what they think you need to know. But it’s also possible that they may not have known themselves. They’re not always able to see everything. This could be coming as a complete surprise to them as well.’

‘Do you think that it might have been one of them who’s been sending the messages?’

‘No, I don’t think so. This isn’t their style. I don’t think they would ever send those words to beings like the humans. Only people like us know about them, what they mean. Humans shouldn’t know about them. It’s not something that should concern them. But, evidently, now it does, for two of them at least.’

There was a pause before Naomi said, ‘So, now we just sit here and wait?’

'I'm afraid so.' She gave Naomi a hug. 'But try not to fear. I'm still here, and Ian's still here. You're not alone. We all have each other, and whatever happens, we'll support each other, and we'll help to protect Steve and Natasha, if they should still need it.' She smiled at Naomi to try and comfort her.

Whilst Naomi appreciated the efforts that Lisa was going to in order to comfort her, they were only having a limited effect. She was now getting more and more afraid.

Ian never leaves the cafe. He can always be found there, available for whenever anyone needs to see him. Of course, sometimes the cafe itself moves, to wherever it is most needed. But Ian will always be found inside of it.

The man who had followed Naomi stayed outside of the cafe for several hours. He was there long into the night. He didn't seem to feel the cold, even though the nights in London were now starting to get bitterly cold. And nobody noticed him. If they had, they might have thought it strange to see a man standing out there on his own in this weather, dressed as he was, all in black, but without a coat. In fact, I think I may have been the only one who could see him, and who knew what he was doing. And yet I couldn't identify him myself. He was not of the Earth, that much was certain. But I had no idea where he did come from. Needless to say, this is extremely worrying, especially with the words 'Destiny Will Fall' being communicated to Steve and Natasha.

Dear reader, you may feel that I am being deliberately evasive about those words and what it is that they mean. I am truly sorry that I have to be so. But believe me when I tell you that you really don't want to know what they mean, and I truly hope that I don't have to tell you. All you need to concern yourself with is that they are bad, very bad indeed. And especially so concerning the events of the past two weeks.

It was very late by the time the man finally left the road by the cafe – it had gone 10pm. He made his way back to Elephant & Castle Station. He took a Bakerloo Line train to Baker Street, and then a Jubilee Line train to Queensbury.

Yes, dear reader, he went to Queensbury. When I saw him on the train I truly hoped with every fibre in my being that he would go anywhere, anywhere at all but there. But I suppose it was inevitable. I suppose that part of me had suspected that he would have had a connection to there from the first moment that I saw him, and you may have as well.

He left the station, and, as I knew he would by this point but hoped that he wouldn't, he made his way over to Claire's house. He opened the door himself without the means of a key – he simply held his hand up to the door and then it was unlocked.

He made his way inside. Lying down on the sofa in the living room was the Dragon Keeper. Her eyes lit up when she saw the man enter the room. 'You've come! I knew you would!'

'Yes, but it is a great shame that I had to come here at all. You know what you were supposed to do. What you were sent here to do. We also sent you him to help.' He nodded his head in the direction of the kitchen, which is where Welt currently was, even though the man hadn't actually been there himself to know that he was there.

'I'm sorry. It was all that Lisa's fault. She came here too, with him. She was on Pyna and she hadn't got her full strength back, and yet she was able to come here at the same time that he did, she somehow managed to travel with him.'

'Yes, well, that was indeed unfortunate and unforeseen by us. I have spent the day observing the city. The two halves think that they are safe, and with nothing further to worry about. Naomi is a little afraid – she has apparently been told that "Destiny Will Fall." The Dragon Keeper gasped when she heard that. 'Ian is here as well, in London, with his ridiculous cafe. Naomi led me to him and she didn't even realise it! And Lisa still remains at the flat of one of the two halves. I am surprised that she has not yet taken action to relocate you. Her stalling will be her downfall.'

'So, what are we to do now?'

'Naomi has reported to Lisa whatever it was that Ian told her. I suspect that he knows that this is not yet over. If I am correct, then Lisa will probably start to take some action. She will probably come here to take your servant back to Pyna, and you as far away from the Earth as she can.'

'So we should go, before she comes here?'

'No, we will not run. We will wait here for her. None of them know about me. None of them know that I am here. She will therefore not be expecting to see me here, or for there to be any real challenge to her taking you and him away from the Earth. But I will be waiting here, for her. We once again have the upper hand, and they are completely oblivious to us!'

Oh, dear reader, I do wish that I was able to communicate with Lisa! I wish I could tell her what it is that I know! Instead all I can do is sit here and watch what happens, utterly helpless, utterly powerless to do anything! I am dreading tomorrow. I feel sick just thinking about it. I do hope that she will be alright. After everything that she has been through, please let her be alright...