

THIRTY DAYS

by

Karl S. Green
(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:

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DAY FIVE

LISA'S EARLIER VISIT

She found the Etiria at the bottom of a shallow stream. She knew at once where it had come from, and rejoiced at the knowledge that she had support from at least one of the All Seeing.

The All Seeing saw her pick up the Etiria, and at once knew that they had a traitor amongst their number. None amongst them excepts the traitor themselves knew who they were.

The All Seeing were angry at this. They had never experienced something like this before. This was again something new, something that they were not prepared for. They were angry not only because the Etiria had been created and given to her, but because they could not see who amongst them had done this. They could not see who amongst them had threatened their own existence.

The Etiria itself was beautiful. It was a small, clear, crystal ball that one could hold in the palm of one hand. It gave the holder clarity and foresight. They could use it to see what the consequences of their actions would be. If they considered one course of action, and saw that the consequences of that course were not what they desired, they could then consider a new course, and to keep doing so until they could see the desired result. Needless to say, if the Etiria fell into the wrong hands it could be used for much evil.

The All Seeing disregarded this. Their lead concern was to stop her. With this goal in mind they tasked the Other to hunt her down and obtain the Etiria...

The Apocolynium – V

On the night of the fourth day Natasha had the most peaceful night's sleep that she had had for a long time. She dreamt frequently and deeply, each dream more pleasant than the last. She dreamt of a storm again, but that she was safe and warm and out of the storm, and being looked after by someone who she couldn't quite see. She dreamt that she was by the River Thames on a clear night, the sky filled with stars, with someone next to her bringing her comfort. She dreamt that she was in a garden at the top of a cliff, overlooking the sea, the sun setting in the west, and making all the clouds above her look like they were on fire, and that someone was here with her too. Then she woke up gradually, a smile on her face, and a feeling of contentment in her heart.

She got out of bed and opened her curtains, and her feeling of contentment started to fade away at the dark and grey sky that greeted her that morning. She sighed, she knew that this was to be expected of a November morning. There would be no further feeling of contentment today. All that lay ahead of her was another day in the office. But at least it was Friday, and she now had the weekend to look forward to. Not only that today was the 5th November – bonfire night, and Diwali fell on today as well, which meant that there would be a good fireworks display on tonight.

She walked into her hallway and saw a piece of paper on the doormat by her front door. She thought this was odd, there had been nothing there when she had gone to bed last night, and it was surely too early for anyone to be out delivering leaflets. She went towards it, picked it up, and opened it. What she saw gave her a shock.

Written on it, in large, bold letters, were the words: 'DESTINY WILL FALL' The same words from her text messages, the messages she thought were part of a marketing scheme. But that couldn't be what they were now. There wasn't any possibility of a marketing company knowing both her mobile phone telephone number and her address, and then hand delivering this piece of paper. Which meant that someone had to be targeting her directly. Someone was intentionally sending her this message.

But what she couldn't figure out was who would want to send her this message, or what on Earth it could have possibly meant. Dear reader, I wish I could provide you with the answers to these questions, but I'm afraid that even I do not have them. Believe me when I tell you that I am as interested in the answers to these questions as much as you are.

She then placed the piece of paper on a small table that she had in her hallway. She was starting to feel very concerned. This did not make sense to her. Why would someone target her in this way? What was she supposed to do with this message?

She knew that there was nothing that she could do about this message for the time being, and so she continued with her morning routine. But those words stuck in her mind. *Destiny Will Fall...*

Meanwhile, over in Belmont, Steve was also getting up for the day. But he was afraid. Very afraid. He hadn't gone to work yesterday. Welt had made him stay at home and talk to him. He wanted to escape, wanted to get out, but no matter how much he struggled he found that his mind wouldn't let him.

Welt was pleased by this. He wasn't sure how it had happened, but he found that he now had some limited powers since arriving on the Earth. Nothing too dramatic. He found that he could speak, read, and understand English. Although, oddly, he found that he couldn't understand any other language. During the day he had got Steve to tell him about the languages of Earth, and through Steve's computer (which Welt thought was a wonderful invention, one that only the people of the Earth could have come up with) he had been shown examples of other languages, both in writing and in sound via You Tube. He had seen and heard examples of French, Spanish, German, Italian, Welsh, Japanese, Mandarin, Hebrew, and Arabic, but he could understand none of them. It was only English that he could understand, although, peculiarly, he

found that he fully understood all of the various versions of it, particularly the differences between British and American English.

He also found that he could have some limited influences on the minds of the people of this world. He was trying out this power on Steve. He couldn't exercise complete control over him, but he could get him to do simple things. For example, he had been able to get him to stay home for the past two days, despite Steve's strong desire to leave, to get away from him.

But Welt wasn't going to allow that. He needed Steve to tell him more about the Earth, so that he could better understand it and try and find out how to gain its power.

And he also felt something odd about Steve himself. As though Steve had a power, a power that even Steve himself was unaware of. Welt firmly believed that Steve had been brought to him for a purpose, and that he would have some part to play in his plan to obtain the Earth's power, although quite what that part would be he was as yet unable to determine.

Steve, however, knew of none of this. As far as he was concerned Welt was just a very strange man. He thought that it was extremely odd that he kept asking him questions about the world, questions that any normal person should have known the answers to. The thought had occurred to him that maybe Welt wasn't from this world, but he quickly dismissed the idea. Whilst he did believe that there was alien life out there in the universe, and that some of that life would probably be intelligent life, he didn't believe that there was any way for those aliens to travel to the Earth. He believed that the only way that they could travel would be in extremely large spacecraft, like an ark for their species, and the journey would take them a long time as they wouldn't be able to travel faster than light, and probably wouldn't get anywhere near light speed anyway. If any such aliens were to travel to the Earth in this manner then he suspected that they would be identified by telescopes long before they actually reached the Earth. And they certainly wouldn't just send down one man to find a random person and then start asking them questions about the Earth. That idea just seemed too farfetched.

Steve felt that the most likely explanation for Welt was that he was a mad man who had escaped from somewhere. Someone who might have believed that they were an alien from an alien world, and were just playing the part. Steve knew that such people could be dangerous. He was right about one thing – Welt certainly was dangerous.

But try as he might to escape from Welt, or to try and contact someone to tell them about him, he found that he just couldn't. He would go up to his front door, reach out for the handle, and then his hand just wouldn't move any further. He would go up to the telephone, pick up the receiver, but his hand refused to dial any numbers. He would open up a new e-mail on his

computer, but his hands would refuse to type anything. This panicked him, and he felt that it might be him that was starting to go crazy.

On the second day of Welt's unwelcome visit he got up and went to his hallway. As with Natasha he, too, had a piece of paper waiting for him on his doormat. However, when he opened it he didn't feel the panic that Natasha had felt when she had opened hers, for his one had the words: 'HELP IS COMING'

He didn't know who had sent this to him, or how they knew of his plight. And neither do I, dear reader. But he was glad that there was someone out there who was aware of his plight, and who was prepared to help him. Quite what they would do, and when they would do it he didn't know, he just hoped that it would be soon.

He then heard Welt call out from his living room, 'Steve, come here. Now.' Steve quickly folded up the piece of paper and placed it in the pocket of his dressing gown, and then went to Welt, despite the fact that he wanted his feet to take him away in the opposite direction.

Tom woke up feeling happier than he had ever felt in a very long time. In the very instant of his waking he thought that seeing Lisa again had all just been a very happy dream, one that he had had many times over the years. And then when the realisation dawned on him that it wasn't a dream, that it was real, that Lisa had actually come back to him, and was sleeping in the next room (or so he thought – Lisa didn't actually require sleep), a feeling of happiness that he had rarely felt before rose up within him.

He had first met Lisa back when he was doing his A-Levels in college. He was between classes, and was sitting on some steps in one of the buildings reading one of his course books. She happened to come and sit down next to him, asking him, 'Is this seat taken?' as she did so. He said it wasn't, and quite frankly he was glad of the company.

He felt too embarrassed to be with his friends, or amongst anyone else that he knew. Because recently a secret of his had got out. A secret that he would have preferred to have kept secret. Ever since he was about 11 years old he found that he had a fondness for wearing clothes that were meant for girls, dresses and skirts in particular. He would often borrow them from his sister without telling her, and then try them on in his room with the door locked. He didn't do this for any fetistic reason, he just liked wearing them. They felt comfortable. They felt right.

Recently he decided that it was getting riskier to keep borrowing them from his sister. He felt that she was getting suspicious of him, and might soon find out his secret. And so he then decided to take the brave step of buying some of his own clothes.

He had got up very early in the morning so that he could go to the shops just as they opened, and thus minimise the risk that he would be spotted by someone that he knew. He knew that there was still a risk involved, but he felt that this risk was lower than the risk of his sister finding out the truth. If she did, and told his parents, he felt that he would simply die of embarrassment. That, and the fact that he didn't know how his parents would take it, if they would be accepting of it.

As he was paying for his selected items he looked out the front window of the shop and was suddenly more afraid than he had ever been before in his life. Coming into the shop was a girl called Sarah, who happened to be on one of his courses. He had fancied Sarah, and had told her as much, but she had rejected him, badly, and he now felt awkward whenever he saw her. Now he felt genuinely afraid. He could see that she could see that the shop assistant was quite clearly bagging a dress and some short skirts for him. Sarah had a massive grin on her face, and looked like she was about to start giggling. She went towards the back of the shop without saying a word to him.

Tom quickly finished his transaction and left the shop as fast as he could. He kept his head down all the way to his house. Sarah was bound to tell everyone at college. People were bound to start laughing at him, and make up jokes about him. Most of them probably wouldn't understand, they might have thought he was gay (he wasn't) or that he secretly wanted to be a woman (he didn't). Word of this would probably get back to his sister and his parents, which meant that he would have to face them at home as well. To put it simply, he felt that the brown stuff had hit the fast moving whirling blades in spectacular fashion.

That had happened on the day before he had met Lisa. On this day he was avoiding as many people as he could at college. His first class of the day had been a Computing class. However, his next class was Media Studies. Sarah was in that class. He didn't know if he could bear to turn up.

Which was why he was glad to have some company. He had never seen Lisa before, and so she didn't know him. She wouldn't have heard about his secret, and so couldn't tease him about it. He could just relax and be himself around her.

They chatted for quite a while, and he found that she was really easy to speak to. She would listen to what he had to say, and wouldn't judge him. He could feel that about her. He couldn't quite explain it, but he felt a warmth emanating from her, a form of comfort.

Eventually she asked him why it was he had been sitting out here on his own. There was a moment of silence. But he had a good feeling about her, he felt that he could tell her anything. And so he told her everything. As he told her she didn't interrupt. She just sat there and listened.

Once he was finished she leant over and hugged him. She said, 'I know that can't have been easy to tell me.' She drew back and continued, 'I know this is going to be hard, but you need to go into that classroom with your head held high. Don't let what Sarah may or may not have told people dissuade you. And if she has told people, you'll probably be surprised by their reactions. Yes, there may be some that make fun of you, who will call you names and laugh at you behind your back. But most people will probably just say, "So what?" and just carry on as before. At the end of the day they'll know that you're not harming anyone.'

'And as for your friends, they'll probably react in the same way. And if any of them don't then you'll know that they aren't true friends. You're real friends, however, will be there to support you. You haven't done anything wrong, and there's nothing wrong with you. You have to remember that. Trust me, everything is going to be fine.'

Those were exactly the words that Tom needed to hear. Already he was feeling a little better about what had happened. He was still a little nervous about who Sarah had told, and how everyone would react, but he felt confident enough to at least go to his class and face whatever was there for him to face.

He thanked Lisa and said he hoped to see her around sometime. She said he could count on it.

He went to his class, and there was very little for him to actually confront. He saw Sarah, who gave him a mischievous smile, and then whispered to Julie, who was one of her closest friends. He surmised that she must have told her at least. But no one said anything about it to him. He went and sat with his friends, who simply asked him where he had been all day.

He saw Lisa quite a lot after that. He was still concerned about Sarah telling everyone. He said that it felt like a ticking bomb, that he was just waiting for it to go off, and that there was nothing that he could do to stop it. Lisa told him that there was something that he could do – he could tell everyone himself, before Sarah did.

He really wasn't sure about this at first. But then Lisa reminded him that his true friends wouldn't be bothered about it. And by telling them he would have it out in the open, so that if Sarah did start to try and cause trouble for him over it, his friends would all be there to help and support him.

This was able to convince him, and so he did go on to tell his friends, one at a time. And every single one, without exception, was completely fine with it. By this point he was really starting to feel better about the whole thing.

But there was still one area that he didn't feel particularly comfortable with – his family. Now that all of his friends knew about it he knew that there was a chance that it would get back

to his family. Once again, Lisa advised them to beat this and just tell them himself, that by telling them there would be no one left for him to tell, or, more precisely, no one else that he had to worry about finding out about it, and so then it wouldn't be bothering him anymore. He again took her advice, and that night he sat down with his family and told them. To his surprise and relief he discovered that they already knew. His sister said, 'Did you really think that I wouldn't figure it out when my skirts mysteriously went missing and would then magically reappear?' And his parents told him that they still loved him just as much as they always had.

It was over – everyone now knew about it, and they were all fine with it. He could finally relax and be comfortable with who he was. If Sarah were to ever try and cause trouble for him, he would be prepared for it.

As it turned out, she never did. A few years later he bumped into her on a night out and they started talking. He brought up the subject of the day when she had seen him. She laughed and smiled, and said she had thought that it was funny at first. But she then told him that she would have never have told anyone else about it, and she never had, not even to Julie. She also told him that she understood a little of what it must have been like for him – she had an uncle who also liked to cross dress.

During all of this episode he grew to like Lisa a lot. Like most of the people who met her, he found himself falling in love with her. She was so kind and understanding. They met up quite a lot, and they didn't always talk about his problems when they did so. Sometimes they just hung out. She even invited him to her house a few times. (In those days Lisa's powers were stronger than they were now, and she was able to use them to create this house.) She let him have a look inside her wardrobe, which he liked a lot. It was there that he was able to remember her measurements.

He told her that he liked her a lot, and even asked her out on a date, on more than one occasion. But each time she turned him down, saying that she wasn't looking for a relationship, with anyone, and that she just wanted to be friends. Whilst this saddened him, he accepted it. Lisa never did get too closely involved with the people that she helped. She never longed for partnership with another person. She only wanted to help people, whether their problems were so great they affected an entire world, or whether, like with Tom, their problems were causing them some difficulties in just their own lives.

Eventually he started seeing less and less of her. Around the same time he met a girl called Penny. Not long after he had met her he told her about his cross dressing, and she was fine with it. And not long after that they started dating. In the end that relationship hadn't worked out, but it was for reasons unconnected with his cross dressing, and do not form part of this tale. But at

the time that he started seeing her Lisa felt that her work here was done, and she slowly disappeared from his life.

But that was all fifteen years ago, and now she was back in his life, only this time she needed his help, and he was glad to give it. He currently found himself single, and so he was hoping that maybe Lisa had changed her mind about having a relationship with him. Of course, that was the last thing on her mind at the moment.

She had come to him because she needed somewhere safe to stay, and someone who could help her get back on her feet on Earth whilst she figured out what to do about Welt. She could feel that he was still relatively close by, within a few miles of her location. She knew that he was trying to obtain the power of the Earth, but that he didn't yet know how he could do so. I suspect that she knows what is required, but that part of her mind I am unable to see, and so I can not tell you, dear reader.

Tom prepared breakfast for the two of them. He knew that she was a vegetarian, and so he gave up his usual fry up, and yesterday had got some breakfast cereals and croissants for her. This was a gesture that she appreciated.

'So,' he said, 'What brings you back to Harrow now? What are you going to do whilst you're here?'

Lisa was silent for a moment, and then said, 'It's really complicated, I can't really explain it. I just need somewhere to stay whilst I sort out a few things. You're OK with that, aren't you?'

She smiled sweetly at him, and he said, 'Yeah, of course. You're welcome to stay as long as you want to.' She hated treating him like this, feeling like she was using him, giving him false hope that maybe they would have a future together. But she needed somewhere to stay, where she could feel relatively safe, and she felt it was best if she stayed with someone who already knew her.

Whilst Tom was out at work she spent the day walking around the parts of Harrow that she remembered, the town centre, and the woods beyond Harrow Weald. She had always liked Harrow. She had somehow felt at home here.

As she walked she thought about her situation. She needed to find Welt and confront him, and stop him from obtaining the Earth's power. But how could she do that? How would Marloki be helping him? And if she could stop him, she would have to try and find a way to take him back to Pyna, and in her weakened state since her return she didn't have the strength to do that.

Then the answer became clear to her – she would need to find and use some power for herself, to build up her strength once more. She knew all too well how risky this could be. In order to stop someone from gaining a dangerous power she would first have to get some of her

own. At least, for her, the power that she needed wasn't going to drain the Earth's of its power, but she knew that she still had to be careful.

As she arrived back at Tom's flat she bumped into a girl she hadn't seen before. This girl happened to be Natasha, who was returning from work. She looked at Lisa and said, 'Oh, hello. Are you staying with Tom?'

'Yeah, I'm an old friend of his from college. I'm in London for a few days, and just needed somewhere to stay and he kindly agreed to put me up.'

'Oh right, cool. Did he tell you about tonight?'

'Tonight?'

'Yeah, it's bonfire night.'

'Oh, right, yes, I forgot it was the 5th.' In everything that had happened Lisa had forgotten all about the peculiar British tradition they had every year on this date, where they celebrated their parliament not getting blown up back in the 17th century. But she could remember the relief felt in London when the plot was first uncovered.

'Well, what Tom and I and some of the others from the building do each year is that we go for a walk around Harrow in the evening and look at all of the various fireworks. It should be pretty good this year as it's also Diwali today, and so there should be a lot of them to see. You'd be very welcome to join us.'

'OK, I will, I'd love to.' And she was genuine when she said this. She had always enjoyed the fireworks on her previous visits to the UK and India around this time of year, and of the various other celebrations throughout the world that used fireworks.

'Great, we'll meet just outside at about 8?'

'OK, I'll see you then.'

Natasha then went back up to her flat. Normally she wouldn't be so keen to invite someone she just met on a night out. But she had a good feeling about Lisa that she couldn't quite explain. She felt that she could trust her.

As Natasha went up the stairs to her flat Lisa also felt something strange. There was something about Natasha that was different. Something that set her apart from everyone else on the Earth.

No, not quite everyone else. She sensed that there was one other on the Earth that also had this something different about them. And that this person wasn't too far away...

That night Tom, Natasha, Lisa, and the other residents of the building went out to enjoy the fireworks. Natasha was right about there being a lot for them to enjoy, although they had to get

out of the rain quite a bit. Lisa looked up at them and marvelled. Whilst the fate of the Earth, Pyna, and every other inhabited planet in this universe was at stake, for the first time since her return she felt that there was hope. She looked at Natasha and felt that half of this hope lived within her.

Her plan of action became clear. First, she would have to find a way to regain her former strength. Then she would have to find the other half to the power that Natasha had. Once the two were brought together, then the solution to the problem of Welt would be revealed to her.

And, dear reader, I suspect that you, as do I, know where this other half may be...