

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:

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DAY FOUR

NEW WORLD

She and the Other now occupied the same world. This was of great concern to her. Whilst already dealing with the woes of this world, she now had a new foe to fight. And yet she knew of the All Seeing, and what their intentions were. And she chose to fight against them, which made them love her and fear her at the same time.

At first she kept away from the Other, not wanting to engage with it too soon. She needed to gauge its strength, find out its weaknesses. And yet she knew that she could not wait for too long, for already the Other was causing havoc on this world. It would need to be dealt with before too much harm could be done.

The All Seeing were watching these events. However, there was one amongst them who did not fear her. One who wanted her to succeed. And so, going against the wishes of the other All Seeing, they sent her an artefact.

And thus was the Etiria created...

The Apocolynium – IV

On the fourth day, Welt woke up. It was dark when he did so, and the night was colder than it normally was, almost as if it were no longer early autumn.

He didn't recognise his surroundings. The ground beneath him was hard and made from stone. Whilst the sky was dark there was a strange yellow light in the air. This emanated from a number of sources at the top of metal poles that were all in a line. He was in an area filled with buildings, but none that he could recognise.

Whilst he did not recognise this scene, if you were to see it you would not find it that unfamiliar. You would recognise it as a street in one of your cities, for that was exactly what it was.

Yes, I regret to inform you that Welt made it to Earth. He *is* on Earth now. I do not know exactly how it was he came to be transported there, but there he is. You should therefore be afraid, dear reader, for he is now among you. Now that he is there Marloki will surely use him to try and find the power that your planet holds.

There also appears to have been a loss of time for Welt. It was midday in Practor when he disappeared into the light. And, as you know, the time in Practor corresponds to the same time in London. However, here it is now midnight – a loss of twelve hours. Where Welt was for those twelve hours I do not know. I am sure that I do not need to tell you, but this is of great concern to me.

After a few moments to adjust himself Welt finally realised where he was. At first this came as a relief to him – he had thoroughly expected to be dead. Then when he realised that he was on the Earth joy started to flow through him. The power he sought was here, and he could feel it, beating away. Even without the stone he could feel it.

Next he felt a sense of fear. Whilst he was where he wanted to be, he knew little of this world. He didn't know its customs or its ways. He didn't even know how to speak its language, or so he thought.

He started to walk. He didn't know where he was going, but he knew that he couldn't stay where he was. He decided that he needed to try and familiarise himself with the local area, and see if there was somewhere where he could rest.

As he walked in the distance he could see what appeared to be a large circle with trees growing in it. You would recognise it as a roundabout (at least those of you in countries that have them would do so). As he continued to walk he saw a couple of signs. To his surprise he found that he was able to read them. They said 'Kenmore Avenue' and 'Elgin Avenue'. You may not know these road signs, but I can tell you that they are in Harrow, in north London.

Those of you who have been following my story will remember that both Steve and Natasha are both residents of Harrow. It would appear that my suspicion that they would have some part to play in all of this is going to turn out to be well founded.

The roundabout that Welt could see was known locally as Belmont Circle. It was this region of Harrow that Steve resided in. He lived in a road called Kenton Lane. This was a long road that went through Harrow, but his flat was in an area very near to Belmont Circle, not far from where Welt was now.

Whilst Welt was walking towards Belmont Circle, Steve slept uneasily. He was having more bad dreams. He dreamt that there was a great beast rampaging through Belmont Circle, coming ever closer to his flat.

Coming ever closer to him...

You may feel afraid to know that Welt is now on your world, and so you should. But I also bring you some good news. Some very good news indeed. Lisa is still alive and well. She too woke up when it was dark, and she too found she was on a hard stone floor, and, yes, she too saw the strange yellow lights in the sky, for, yes, she too was on the Earth! This is a strange occurrence and I do not know how it has come to pass, but that does not matter at the moment. Lisa is on the Earth, and as long as she is here then there is hope.

Lisa rejoiced when she saw where she was. She had been to the Earth many times before, and at many points in its history. She knew all about this world and of all of its various peoples and cultures. She was always happy when she was on the Earth. She always knew of its importance in the grand scheme of things. It was also the planet from which she chose to take

her eventual name from, a name that she decided that she would use on all of the other worlds that she visited during her lifetime.

Whilst she was happy that she was back on the Earth, she did not forget the reason why she was back on the Earth. She could feel that Welt was here too, and that he was not too far from where she was now. And indeed he wasn't. As Welt was walking towards Belmont Circle, Lisa found herself in the area of Harrow known as Wealdstone. Wealdstone and Belmont Circle are very close to each other. A person who has a good walking speed would be able to walk between the two within the space of around fifteen to twenty minutes. Lisa was aware of this fact, but she did not want to approach Welt now. She too needed to find her bearings, and to decide what to do next.

Whilst Lisa was able to detect Welt, he was not able to detect her. This can only be a good thing. If he were to know that she was here on the Earth as well then that would be of an advantage to him. As things stand, it is Lisa who has the advantage.

Now, Lisa was in the Wealdstone area of Harrow. You may well remember me telling you that Natasha lived in the Harrow Weald area of Harrow. Casual visitors to Wealdstone often make the mistake of referring to it as Harrow Weald, when in fact Wealdstone and Harrow Weald are two separate and distinct areas of Harrow. Harrow Weald is a short distance down the road from Wealdstone.

Lisa looked around her, and quickly knew where she was. She knew Harrow reasonably well – she had been here before in the mid 1990's. She was standing outside Harrow and Wealdstone station. She decided that she needed to keep clear of Welt, at least for the time being. But she also knew that she couldn't stay where she was as it wasn't safe. Whilst the people of the Earth wouldn't be able to physically harm her, it would still not be good if she was spotted and people started asking questions of her.

She remembered that, if she went over the bridge that went over the railway lines, and kept on going down the road, and then took a left just before she got to the town centre, there would be another bridge, one which she could walk under, and then on the other side of that there was a park. It may not have been the safest place that she could be, but she felt that, given the circumstances that she now found herself in, it was probably the safest place that she could be for now.

Meanwhile, whilst Lisa started to make her way towards the park, Natasha was dreaming. But, for the first time for a few days, her dreams were relatively pleasant. She dreamt that there had been a terrible storm in Harrow, one that had been worse than the great storm of '87, which

she was able to remember. But the storm was over now, that everyone was safe, that the bright sunshine was starting to beam out from behind the clouds...

On Pyna, Prion, Sarna, Parto, and Gramshaw had been at a loss to explain what had happened to Welt and Lisa. But what they were all able to agree on is that there was nothing more that they could do on The Ledge, and that getting caught there would not be a good thing. They made their escape via the same route that they had come in. I won't bore you with the details, but what I can tell you is that, whilst they did have a little difficulty in climbing down the spiral staircase where they had to avoid other people, it didn't take them as long to get out as it did to get in.

Although, once they were at the bottom of the staircase their only option was to go back down the corridor and to the entrance to the sewers, which meant that they were going to get another covering of what it is one finds in a sewer. Needless to say they weren't too happy about this, Parto in particular.

Once they were outside it was the middle of the afternoon. They had to find a way out of the city, but that would not be easy. It was now teeming with people, and they would stand out like sore thumbs, looking and smelling the way that they did. They decided that the only thing that they could do was wait out the day where they were, hoping that few, if any, people would wander down here, and then they could try and find a way out by nightfall.

The gates were shut at around Pyna's equivalent of 11pm, and the party waited a little longer after that to allow people from the neighbourhood that they were in to make their way back to their homes. Once the streets appeared to be quiet they decided to make their move.

They walked along the edge of the city, all the way towards the gate that was between them and the neighbourhood where they had first entered the city. The city's wall was too tall and smooth for them to climb, and there were no weak points under it. They doubled back, and considered following the stream that the sewage outlet flowed into. However, a short way down the stream they saw that it flowed under the city wall. They had a good look, and determined that the hole that it passed through was too low, and it would have been too dangerous for them to have tried to dive down through the stream and the sewage to try and find it to pass through it.

They followed the city wall towards the gate to the next neighbourhood, and, again, they could find no weak points.

'We're trapped,' said Parto. 'There's no way for us to get out! The only way we're getting out is by getting caught, being sent back to that ledge, and getting over the city wall that way. And I don't like that way!'

‘Calm down,’ said Gramshaw. ‘I’m sure we can find some way to get out of here, we just need to think about it.’

At that point they heard footsteps coming towards them. ‘Quick,’ said Prion, ‘We’ve got to hide.’ They quickly started to move down a side street, but then they quickly realised that this side street was a dead end with no turnings – and nowhere to hide. It was a clear night, and Pyna’s moon (which was always full) was shining brightly. They were terribly exposed. The footsteps were getting closer. The owner of them would only have to look down the side street, and he would see the party.

Prion whispered to the others, ‘Keep as still as possible. If we’re not moving, and he doesn’t look directly at us, he may not notice us.’ Normally in this situation this would be a good plan. However, Prion had failed to take into account the fact that they were still carrying the smell from the sewer with them. Having had this smell on them for well over half a day he had started to not notice it as much.

The owner of the footsteps, however, did notice it. The smell was incredibly strong, and it deeply offended his nostrils. As he passed the side street he could tell that it was the source of this disgusting smell, and he looked down it, right at the party.

His name was Jogen, and he was slowly making his way home from the local tavern after a long day spent working in a factory. The party were indeed an odd sight for him to behold. ‘What are you doing here?’ he asked them. ‘And, more to the point, who are you?’

It was Sarna who responded to him. ‘We’re from the next neighbourhood along. We lost track of time and now we’re trapped here. Please, don’t inform the guards, we won’t be any trouble, I promise.’

‘I probably won’t have to tell them, you’re stinking the place out! What have you been doing to be smelling so bad?’

‘We were down by the stream where the sewer outlet is. Unfortunately we slipped and fell in.’

Jogen looked at them all. He wasn’t sure if he believed their story, but he considered himself to normally be a good judge of character, and he felt it in his bones that these people weren’t going to be trouble makers. He knew that he had to make a decision about what to do. He could go and alert the guards, which would see them arrested and thrown into the dungeons for a few nights. Or he could leave them be, and let the guards find them on their own, which would again see them thrown into the dungeons for a few nights. But something in his heart that he couldn’t quite describe told him that he shouldn’t do either of those things. There was something inside him, a gut feeling, that was telling him that he should help these people.

He said, 'Well, you can't stand around there all night. You'll wake everyone up with that smell. I suppose you'd better come with me.' He saw the alarm in their faces, and then continued, 'Don't worry, I'm not going to take you to the guards. I never did like the policy of shutting all the neighbourhoods off from one another at night. Someone should do something to change that law. I'll be able to put you up for the night. Just *one* night, mind. You can have a wash and get your clothes cleaned.'

Sarna smiled and said, 'Thank you, that's very kind.'

'Well, come on then. Follow me.' Jogen knew that this was not something that he would normally do, but he also felt that it was somehow the right thing to do.

On Earth Welt crossed the road to the roundabout at Belmont Circle itself and sat down. He looked up into the sky, and became concerned when he couldn't see many stars there. Now, of course, there are just as many stars in the skies above Earth as there are in the skies above Pyna, it was just that there is far more light pollution on Earth, in London in particular, and he simply wasn't able to see as many.

But he did not know this, and it unnerved him. He started to feel a little afraid. Here he was in an unfamiliar world, with no way of knowing how or when he would get back home. Oh, he knew that there was a great power on the Earth, but he didn't know exactly how he would be able to go about getting it. Now that he no longer had the stone he had little left to guide him.

He lay down, flat on his back, and closed his eyes. He then muttered quietly, *Marloki, if you can hear me, please help me. I am sorry that I did not carry out your instructions on The Ledge, I am sorry that I doubted you, but you have still brought me here. Now that I am, I need you to guide me. Tell me where I need to go and what I need to do in order to gain the power that I seek.*

Now, whilst Welt believed that Marloki had brought him to the Earth, I know that that is not so. I don't know exactly how he was brought to the Earth, or if indeed anyone was behind it, but I do know that it was not Marloki that brought him here.

That aside, I also know that Marloki did hear Welt's words from where it is. And from there it asserted its power on the Earth, just a little, just enough to get another gear in the machine moving along towards what I fear will be terrible consequences before too long.

Shortly after Welt had spoken to Marloki, Steve had another dream. He dreamt about Belmont Circle. He felt that there was something on the roundabout itself that he had to get to, something that he had to find. It was very important that he went there. He didn't know exactly why it was important, he just knew that it was.

He then woke with a start. He was sweating and breathing heavily. The dream had felt oh so very real to him. Could it be that there really was something on the roundabout? Something that he needed to find?

He knew it was crazy, he knew that it was only a dream, but he also felt that there could be no real harm in going out and having a quick look, just in case there was something there. Of course, he knew that there wasn't really going to be anything there. How could there be? There never was anything of interest there. There was no point going there at all. But he knew that he wasn't going to be able to go back to sleep anytime soon, and so he figured he may as well go and check it out.

He got out of bed and quickly put some clothes on – just an old tracksuit that he normally only wore when he was lounging around the flat. He then put some shoes on and then, making sure that he had his keys with him, he ventured out of his flat.

He noticed how much quieter the place seemed at this time of night. Normally there was a lot of traffic going down Kenton Lane and around Belmont Circle, but at this time in the morning there was virtually nothing. There was the odd car every now and then, but nothing near as much as there normally was.

He quickly made his way to the roundabout, going past Tesco and the Esso station before crossing the road onto the roundabout itself. He stood on the edge and looked about. No, there was nothing here, it was all just a stupid dream after all. There had been absolutely no point in him coming here. He could just leave now, go back to his flat, go back to his bed, and forget the whole thing had ever happened. He could have done that. He could have taken that decision. It wouldn't have been hard to do. He could have just turned around and walked away.

He could have, but he didn't.

Instead, Welt noticed him standing there, and he got up. He looked at Steve and said, 'You have been sent to help me...'

Lisa stayed in the park until the morning. She spent her time thinking about what she was going to do. She had to find a way to stop Welt. She suspected that Marloki may find a way of contacting him, and if it could do that then it could guide Welt to the Earth's power. But before she could find, confront, and deal with Welt, she had to secure her own position. She knew that she couldn't stay here in the park forever. This was only a temporary stop gap whilst she decided on her next move.

If anyone were to walk through this park now and were to see her then they would surely notice her. This was a November night, and she wasn't exactly in the proper attire. A girl on her

own in a park in a blue dress and bare feet is not something one would normally see in Harrow in early November. Whilst she didn't feel the cold, or any discomfort in her feet, the last thing that she needed was to draw attention to herself. She therefore decided that one of the first things that she needed to do was to find some appropriate clothes for herself, and some shoes.

But where could she get these things from? There were plenty of shops in the area that sold clothes, but she didn't feel she could just go in there and buy some. Whilst money wouldn't have been an issue – she could create that in her hands at will – the very act of walking into a shop wearing what she was already wearing would have drawn attention to herself.

(As an aside, you may be wondering how it is she can create money at will, but not some suitable clothing. It is a very complex matter. You see, the money that she creates is not really money, just something that has the illusion of money. The holders of it believe that they are handling money, but it is really just a form of energy. As bank notes and coins are relatively small, Lisa was able to create the energy needed in this form. However, she didn't possess the power to create the energy required to produce the clothes that she needed, at least not in her current form.)

Nor could she bring herself to somehow steal some clothes from somewhere. Despite the fact that the fate of not just the Earth and Pyna were at stake, but the fates of many other worlds were as well, she still could not bring herself to steal from anyone. (She didn't see the fake money as stealing as such, as it still went into the shops bank accounts and into the monetary system of the country she was in, and so no one had really lost anything, and it was not something that she did often.)

Then an idea came to her. It was not one that she liked, and it would have been something that she would have liked to avoid. But in the end she felt that she had no choice.

She got up and started to walk. She knew that she had to go and see someone in Harrow Weald.

Back on Pyna, Jogen's wife, Marlella, said that she could take the parties clothes down to the laundry and get them washed for them. Of course, they would have to pay her for this, but they were happy to. In the meantime, Jogen had found sufficient robes for them to wear, whilst they all took it turns to have a bath. (Fortunately, Practor was sufficiently advanced enough to have running water, although they did not have hot and cold running water. As they didn't have enough time to heat sufficient water for all of them they had to have their baths cold, and so they had them quickly, just enough to get most of the filth off of them, and to remove the smell.)

Whilst they washed he chatted to them, asking them about who they were and what they did. They told him their professions – once Gramshaw said that he was normally a lumberjack Jogen seemed impressed and said that there may be some work going with a friend of his if Gramshaw was interested, but Gramshaw declined. They also told him that they also worked together to deal with bandits. It was here that they lied a little, saying that they had followed a band back into Practor, and they led them in an elaborate game of cat and mouse (or, rather, the Pynarian equivalent of ‘cat’ and ‘mouse’), which resulted in them ending up falling into the stream near the sewer outlet. They didn’t tell him anything about Lisa, Welt, what had happened on The Ledge, or the fact that they were really from Allana.

Once they were washed he was able to put them up in his spare room for the night. Prion and Sarna shared the bed, the others had to sleep on the floor, but it was no worse than what they had had to sleep on before.

In the morning Jogen advised the party that he didn’t have sufficient food to offer them all breakfast, but that he could lend them some clothes so that they could go to the local tavern and get something to eat whilst they waited for Marlella to wash their clothes. By this point they were famished, and so they accepted his offer.

Marlella lent Sarna one of her dresses, and Jogen had shirts and trousers that fitted Prion and Parto reasonably well. However, Gramshaw was shorter and stockier than the others, and Jogen simply did not have anything that would fit him.

At that point Marlella had an idea. She rooted around inside of her wardrobe, and then dug out one of her old dresses. Gramshaw looked at it and said, ‘I can’t wear that!’

‘Nonsense!’ said Marlella, ‘There’s nothing wrong with a man wearing a dress these days! Lots of men about these parts are doing so. Don’t worry, you’ll be fine. You’ve got absolutely nothing to worry about.’ Because he was very hungry, and didn’t want to have to wait for the others to bring him back something to eat, he reluctantly agreed to put on the dress.

Jogen took them to the local tavern, where they ordered more bowls of porridge. As they waited for their food Gramshaw was very self conscious as he looked around the bar. There were a group of men standing next to them who were looking at him and sniggering. Jogen gave them a sharp look and said, ‘Oi, that’s enough of that. He’s a lumberjack, and he’s OK.’ The men didn’t say anything and just walked away, although they were still sniggering.

Gramshaw muttered to the others, ‘Can we get this over with as quickly as possible?’ He then looked up and across the bar. There he saw another man who was also wearing a dress. He nodded in Gramshaw’s direction and raised his glass to him. Gramshaw decided to just keep his head down.

Once they had eaten they returned to Jogen's house, and waited for their clothes. Once Marlella came back with them they quickly changed into them, Gramshaw faster than the others. They then thanked their hosts, paid Marlella for the washing, and then left for the main gate.

They were nearly out of the city, there was just one more obstacle that they had to get through, and that was the guards at the main gate itself. It was normal for them to check the people who left the city, and things could have got awkward if they had started to ask the party questions.

'Just stay calm,' said Prion. 'Keep walking and don't draw attention to ourselves.'

Just as they were approaching the gate another group of travellers were entering the city. 'Oi,' said the Head Guard, who was a different Head Guard to the one that our party had encountered. 'What business do you lot have in Triceria? You're not Allanan's are you?' The party got a shock when they heard this, but they breathed a sigh of relief when they saw that the comments were directed towards the party that was entering the city.

Once they were safely outside of the city's gates they kept on walking. Parto asked, 'Which way shall we go?'

Sarna said, 'With nothing else to go on I say we go south, back towards Allana.' They all agreed with this suggestion, and headed towards the road that led south.

On Earth, Welt had made Steve take him back to his flat. He had instructed Steve that he was to help him with whatever it was he required. Steve tried to reason with him, to say that he had to go to work in the morning. But Welt had some sort of hypnotic control over him. 'You will serve me,' he said. 'First, you will bring me some food. And then you will tell me about this place, your world. It's people and it's customs. Serve me well and it will be worth your while.'

Steve wanted to resist, wanted this man to be gone from his flat. But something inside of him was making him keep Welt here. Something that he tried to fight against but could not.

And, for some reason, there was one word that kept going round and round in his head: *Marloki, Marloki, Marloki...*

Once Lisa had reached her destination in Harrow Weald she rang the doorbell. She waited a few minutes for it to be answered. But then, there he was, Tom.

'Lisa?' he said, bemused. 'Is that you?' She nodded. Her appearance was exactly the same as it had been in the mid 1990's. Exactly the same, she hadn't aged a day. 'Oh my word, what brings you back here?'

'It's a long story, and I don't have time to explain. Can I come inside?'

‘Yes, yes, of course.’

She quickly stepped inside, and she now felt relatively safe. She made it a rule never to go back and see the people that she had helped in the past. It could lead to all sorts of complications. But given the circumstances that she now found herself in she felt that she had little choice in the matter.

‘How have you been? It must have been at fifteen years since I last saw you. I have to say you’re looking remarkably well.’ He looked her up and down. It had been no secret that he had developed feelings for her when she was last here, feelings that she did not, could not, reciprocate. Tom then said, ‘Are you OK? Is there something wrong?’

‘Yes, no, oh, I don’t know. But I need your help. I need you to get me some proper clothes, I can’t go out in this much longer.’

‘Yes, they’re not exactly November clothes. And you haven’t been out in bare feet all night have you?’

‘Look, could you just go out and get me some clothes? And some shoes as well, something sensible, that I can walk in. Don’t worry about the money, I can give you what you need.’

‘Sure, no problem. I’ll go in a minute.’

‘I need you to go now.’ By now it was nearly 9am, and the shops would soon be opening. ‘We can talk once you’re back.’

‘OK, if you insist.’ Tom was taken aback by Lisa’s reappearance. But he found that he loved her now as much as he had loved her when he had first seen her, and he was prepared to do anything for her, even get odd looks in shops as he bought women’s clothing for her, although buying women’s clothing was something that he had had prior experience of, and on those occasions the clothes hadn’t been intended for any woman to wear...

Lisa gave him some money, and he quickly made his way to the shops. He remembered her measurements and shoe size from the last time that she was here, and he was able to get her some sensible trousers, a sensible top, some sensible blouses, some sensible underwear, some sensible socks, and some sensible shoes. Once he had them he quickly returned to his flat.

Once he was back inside he gave the clothes to Lisa. ‘Great,’ she said, ‘You’ve done a good job.’ He stood there watching her. ‘Do you mind leaving the room whilst I get changed?’

‘Oh, yes, of course...’ He stepped out to the kitchen. When he was there he asked, ‘Do you want anything to drink?’

‘No, I’m good thanks.’

He quickly made himself a cup of coffee, and by the time he returned to his living room she had got changed.

Lisa felt that she had finally made a start. She was now properly dressed for Earth, and could now start thinking about what to do about Welt. But first she had to deal with Tom.

Little did she know that above Tom's flat was Natasha's. And I feel that it is Natasha's help that she will really need. Although by this time Natasha was already at work.

That, my friends, are the main events of the fourth day. On Pyna our party is heading south, back to Allana. On Earth Welt has found Steve, and is learning from him the ways of the Earth. Lisa has returned to one she has helped before, breaking one of her own rules. But it has brought her close to Natasha, who I think will soon play a very important part in this tale, more important than she can ever realise...