

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:

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 NINETEEN

MOUNT HOLAYNER

She knew that she couldn't remain in this reality forever. Sooner or later the Other would catch up to her and she would have to face it, for good or ill. But in the true reality she had been stripped of her powers, and was therefore defenceless. If the Other caught up to her whilst she was in that state she would surely find herself defeated, and quickly.

But now the reality within her own mind made her think. If its people could become self aware, could act of their own free will, without intervention or direction from her, what else could this reality produce?

It had its own galaxies, its own stars and planets, its own people, and now it had its own self-awareness. She started to think – what if it also had its own powers? What if it had powers that she herself could harness?

And then, what if she could bring these powers with her, back into the true reality...?

The Apocolynium – XIX

Gramshaw and Serenna watched the sun rise from the deck of the ship. Despite the fact that he hadn't slept all night, Gramshaw wasn't feeling in the least bit tired. He wasn't quite sure as to what he should attribute this to – the effect of having been in the crystal cave, the crystal that he now wore around his neck, or having his feelings of love being stirred once more by this girl. He couldn't explain why he felt so strongly for her when he had only known her for a short time, but he definitely felt a strong connection with her.

For her part she also felt such a connection. She had always been a believer in love at first sight, and now she was experiencing it for herself. There was just something about Gramshaw that spoke to her soul.

And, dear reader, just between you and me, I think that there may have been another being that had a part to play in bringing these two soul mates together, but that should not concern you for it lies outside the scope of this tale.

They went to the side of the deck, and they could see that they were approaching land. They could see Returia in the distance. 'We'll be there soon,' said Serenna. 'And you'll be going to the Holim Mountains?'

'Yes, that is where we were instructed to go.'

'And you don't know what for?'

'No, I was told that we'd be informed once we got there.'

'Do you know how long you'll be gone for?'

'Unfortunately not.'

'Well, I want you to know, I'll be waiting for you when you come back.'

'But, how will I know where you'll be? You're always sailing everywhere.'

‘But I always come back to Nilona. If I’m at sea when you come back, wait for me there.’
He kissed her forehead and hugged her.

Around an hour later everyone else on the ship was awake, and they were preparing to dock at Returia. Parto asked Gramshaw, ‘Where did you get to last night?’

‘That, my friend, is none of your business.’

Sarna then said, ‘Leave him alone, Parto.’

The ship was brought into port, where they could see a small crowd of men wearing white hooded robes waiting for them. Once the ship had docked and the party prepared to disembark, the men bowed their heads. They all said in unison, ‘Hail the Chosen Ones!’

The party slowly walked down to meet them. Their leader approached them and said, ‘Our legends foretold of your coming. Please, follow us. You will need to stay with us until noon.’ The party sensed no malice from these men, and so they followed them.

They led them towards a shrine that had been in Returia for over 500 years. The robed men’s leader (I can only refer to him as that as these men had no names) said that within their shrine was a lamp that never went out. They didn’t need to do anything to attend to the lamp, it stay lit of its own accord. Their legends said that once the lamp did go out, the following day a ship would arrive at the port of Returia. Aboard that ship would be the four Chosen Ones, sent there on a mission of vital importance to Pyna, and the world known as the Earth, which they knew as the World of the Universal Power.

The legends stated that the Chosen Ones were to stay at their shrine until noon on the day of their arrival, after which the order of the robed men were to escort them to Mount Holayner in the Holim Mountains, where the next part of their quest would begin.

On their way to the shrine, after hearing of this, Parto said quietly to Gramshaw, ‘A lot of people seem to have been expecting us for a very long time.’

‘Yes, indeed they do. It would appear that a greater power has a plan for the events that are to take place. We just need to hope that this power is on our side.’

Once at the shrine the leader led them into a room, where a great feast had been laid out for them. ‘Please,’ he said, ‘Rest and recover here. We will pray for you in our main chamber until noon.’ He bowed before them, and then left the room.

‘Well,’ said Parto, ‘Whoever it is who’s arranged all of this certainly wants us fattened up before they put their plan into action!’ He then went on to start eating the food.

‘Be careful, Parto,’ said Gramshaw, ‘You shouldn’t get too accustomed to this sort of food.’

'I know, but you shouldn't be too quick to pass it up. We don't know what's going to happen to us next. For all we know, this could be the last meal that we get to eat for a while.'

Gramshaw had to accept that Parto had a good point, and so he then started to eat the food as well.

After a few hours the leader of the robed men came to collect them. As they left the shrine the streets of Returia were lined with people. Word of their arrival had quickly spread throughout the town. As the party were led through the streets everyone bowed their heads towards them. Although the party still found this behaviour unusual, they were starting to get used to it.

The robed men led them out of the town, and onto the road towards the Holim Mountains, which they could see a short distance away. The men were silent throughout this part of the journey, and so were the party. Each member of the party was reflecting on what had gone on before, and what was yet to come.

After a couple of hours they arrived at the base of the mountains. The robed men's leader informed the party that the mountain before them was Mount Holayner. He instructed them to stay where they were until instructed further.

He then returned to the other robed men, and they all got down on their knees, facing the mountain. They clasped their hands together, and bowed their heads towards the mountain. The party watched them, but could not tell what it was they were actually doing. From what they could tell they were just kneeling there.

They were, in fact, praying to the mountain. In each of their hands they held a tiny crystal, not unlike the ones that the party now wore around their necks. As they prayed, the crystals in their hands started to glow.

Around fifteen minutes later the ground started to shake slightly. Before them a hole started to emerge in the side of the mountain, as if an ancient hidden door was now starting to open up. Once it had fully opened the robed men stood up, and they turned to face the party. Their leader approached them and said, 'You will now need to go inside the mountain. Follow the path inside the mountain, to its very heart. There you will be informed of the next part of your quest. Our prayers, and the prayers of everyone on Pyna, will be with you.'

The party bowed their heads towards the robed men without saying a word, and then walked into the mountain.

It was dark inside the mountain. As soon as they were all inside the ground started to shake again. The entrance to the mountain was closing. Once it was completely shut it was pitch black inside the mountain.

Parto said, 'Anyone feel like we've just walked into a trap?'

As soon as he had said that, rivers of crystals embedded into the walls of the passage that they were in started to glow a dull blue colour. The light wasn't particularly bright, but it was bright enough for them to see by and avoid walking into any walls or each other. They could see that the path before them headed off into the distance, and then wound upwards and to the left.

'Let's go,' said Prion, and then they started to walk along the path.

After it had turned to the left there was another long straight part, before it wound upwards and to the left again. They continued to walk along it, and it kept repeating this pattern, although the distances between the two winding parts decreased each time.

After about thirty minutes Parto said, 'How long is this going to go on for?'

'None of us knows,' said Gramshaw, 'But we are within the mountain, climbing it from the inside, and so all we do know is that it will not go on forever.'

After a further couple of hours of this they could see that the path before them did not go on winding upwards to the left. It appeared to end in a dead end. Seeing that the end was now in sight they redoubled their efforts to reach it. As they did so they saw that there were four hand-like shapes marked on the wall in front of them, all for a right hand. Prion looked at them and said, 'I think it's pretty clear what it is we are meant to do.' He placed his hand on one of the shapes, and the others followed suit. As soon as they did the mountain started to rumble again, and the light within the tunnel suddenly got a lot brighter, to the point that it was as bright as the daylight outside.

The wall before them opened up as if it were a door. Inside they could make out a circular room with a blinding light in the centre of it. The light seemed to be fluid and swirling, but they couldn't make out what was creating the light.

They then heard a masculine voice say, 'Enter! The Chosen Ones will enter!' The four of them walked into the room, and the door closed behind them. The voice continued, 'The time has come. The Earth is in grave danger. He has arrived there. Lisa has been caught. He must be defeated. This is your task. Enter the light, and seek her out. Go now! Do not delay! The Earth, and all other inhabited worlds of this universe, including Pyna, depends upon your success!'

The four of them looked at each other for a moment, unsure as to what it is that they should do. It was then Parto who said, 'Well, we can't go back, and so unless anyone has a better idea...' No one said anything, and so Parto nodded his head. He turned to face the light, and walked into it. There was a brief, bright flare, and then he was gone.

Gramshaw then said, 'I'll be damned if he's going to have all of the fun.' He then followed him into the light.

Prion and Sarna looked at each other and smiled. Prion said, 'This is it then.'

'Yes, for better or worse.'

They held each other's hands, and then walked into the light together.

When they emerged from the light they found themselves in some woodland. It was dark. They could see some strange lights to one side and in the distance. They could also hear an unfamiliar noise. However, dear reader, this noise would not be unfamiliar to you, for it was the sounds of cars passing along a road.

Yes, dear reader, the party had arrived on Earth. It was just approaching midnight at the end of the nineteenth day. They were in the woodlands to the north of Harrow Weald, in Harrow, in London.

Now we need to hope that they can find Lisa, and find her quickly...