

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 SEVEN

THE SIREN OF THE CAVE

Once she was aware that the Other had shifted its phase she knew that it would be seeking her out. She couldn't detect when or where it would come. She knew that she only had one option open to her.

She ran.

She ran from world to world, galaxy to galaxy. All of the inhabited worlds of that age were visited by her. Every single one that was populated in those early days. Whilst on each world she had time to help one person with one problem, shifting their life onto a more positive course.

But after she had helped one person she felt the need to move on, quickly, in case the Other should catch up with her.

This did not please the All Seeing. They had sent the Other to deal with her, to stop her from meddling in people's affairs. Before they had sent the Other she had only been involved on two worlds. Now, as a result of sending down the Other, she had affected all of the inhabited worlds. The whole of this universe had now been touched by her.

The All Seeing decided that there was now only one action left to them. They would have to lay a trap for her...

The Apocolynium – VII

During the sixth day Lisa didn't go out. She spent the day thinking. She had to find a way to regain her lost power. She knew that this would be a dangerous prospect. If she took too much of the Earth's power she might harm it, and too much power within herself would have the potential to make her become unstable. No, she had to find a source of power that wouldn't harm anyone on this world, and then only take enough of that power to restore her to her original strength, and no more than that.

She thought long and hard about where she might be able to obtain such a power. Then, by the afternoon, it came to her. She went up to Tom and asked him, 'How would you like to go for a walk tomorrow?'

Steve didn't wake up until shortly after 11am on the seventh day. As he awoke he was so out of it that he was completely disorientated – he didn't know how long he had been asleep for, where he was, what time it was, or even what day it was. He hadn't felt like this since one time when he was child, where he had had a particularly nasty cold and he had fallen asleep in the afternoon in his parent's bed (it hadn't been his intention to go to sleep) and woke up around six hours later, thinking that it was the next day. This time it wasn't an illness that he was fighting, but recovering from the effects of Welt's control over him, and he had been asleep for twenty hours.

He tried to sit up, but found that he wasn't able to – he was still feeling exceptionally weak. He then tried to remember what had happened. He remembered Big Ben chiming the hour as he bumped into a woman –

The woman! That was the key. He focussed on her. Yes, he remembered her taking his hand and leading him into the station, right the way down to the lowest level. Then there was a blank in his memory, followed by him getting off of the train, but he couldn't remember at what station. Then she took him into a house, which must be this house. Yes, she was the one that had saved him. But how?

He looked around the room that he was in, not that there was much to look at. The curtains were drawn, but he could see that it was daylight outside. Could it really still be the same day? The last events that he could remember seemed to have taken place an age ago. The curtains themselves were a plain deep blue colour, which matched the colour of the duvet that he was under. The walls of the room that he was in were painted a pastel green colour. There was a cream coloured carpet on the floor. Right to his left was the door to this room, which was painted white and closed. On the left hand side of the room was a brown desk with two draws, but nothing on the desk itself. There was a simple wooden chair under it. In the far left hand corner there was a wardrobe, also painted white. Over in the right hand side corner was a comfy looking black chair. To his right was a bedside table with a lamp, and a small analogue clock on it that he could hear ticking. He looked at the time – it had just gone 11 o'clock.

But that couldn't be right, he felt. It was still daylight outside – it should be dark long before 11. Surely this couldn't be 11 o'clock on the next day?

He tried sitting up again, and found that he had better luck this time. He found that he was still wearing his clothes from yesterday, with his phone, Oyster card, and wallet still in his pockets, although someone had taken off his shoes and placed them neatly by the side of the bed. The woman – she must have done that. Naomi...

Yes, that was her name. Naomi Worn. He thought that he may have heard the name somewhere before, but couldn't quite think where. He thought that yesterday she had said something about being his knight, but he felt that in his confused state he must have misheard her.

He slowly placed one foot on the floor, swung round, and brought down his other foot so that he was now sitting on the bed. Whilst he felt that he should stay in the bed, he didn't want to be stuck in here without knowing where he was, or who she was. He then slowly stood up. He felt a little unsteady on his feet, but he felt that he could just about walk. He slowly walked towards the door, and opened it.

The hallway he found himself in was on the ground floor, and had hardwood flooring. To his right he could hear someone typing on a computer. There was a room that was right next to his, and the door was open. He walked through it.

In the other room Naomi was sat at a computer, although he couldn't recognise what program she was running. There were all sorts of shapes on the screen that he didn't recognise. At that point his legs gave way from under him, and he collapsed to the floor, which, fortunately for him, was carpeted in this room.

Upon hearing this Naomi quickly got up and went over to him. 'What are you doing out of bed? You should be resting.'

Steve found that he could only manage a whisper. 'Sorry... didn't... know... where... I was.'

'It's OK, you're safe now. You should go back to bed and rest some more. You'll be fine soon. Come on, I'll help you get back there.' She placed one of his arms around her shoulder and helped him get back up onto his feet, before taking him back to his room.

Once he was back on the bed he started to say, 'How... long...'

'You've been asleep almost a whole day. What you've been through for the past few days has really drained you. But you're going to be fine. You just need to rest. Now, I'm going to get you a glass of water, and then you have to *rest*. It's imperative that you do, do you understand me?' He nodded. She smiled at him, and then she left the room to get him his water.

He took out his phone, Oyster card, and wallet, and placed them on the bedside table. He then climbed back under the covers. He still didn't know who she was, and how she seemed to know about what had happened to him. Part of his mind thought that she might be drugging him, which is why he currently felt so weak, but the rest of him felt that there was no malice in her heart, and that she could be trusted. However, he couldn't explain why he felt that way about her.

She came back in with his glass of water, and he drank a couple of gulps. 'Easy now,' she said, 'You don't want to overdo it.' He placed the glass on the bedside table. She then said, 'I'm going to have to go out for a bit. You'll be fine here on your own. Welt won't know that you're here and so won't be coming after you. But there's someone who I have to go and see. I'll be a couple of hours. Now you need to promise me that you're going to stay in bed whilst I'm gone – I don't want to find you collapsed in the hallway when I get back, do you understand?' He nodded again. 'Good,' she said with a smile, 'I'll see you later.' She left the room, closing the door behind her.

Steve put his head back down on the pillow. He felt a feeling of safety and comfort wash over him, as he drifted back off to sleep.

For the past two days on Pyna our party have been slowly making their way south, staying overnight at the inns of a couple of villages in Triceria. During their journey south they were being careful to keep a low profile. They knew that if the Tricerian authorities were to catch them and find out that they were Allanans then they would be arrested and tried for espionage, the penalty for which was death. However, they were also concerned that once they reached the border with Allana they would have difficulty in crossing it in order to get back home. As they continued walking towards the border they tried not to think about that.

Around noon on the seventh day they arrived in the village of Ratine, where they decided to get some lunch. Since leaving Practor behind them Parto had insisted that they all eat three meals a day. The others agreed to this, but their diminishing funds meant that they could only afford simple meals, with just water to wash them down with.

Parto hungrily got into his broth once it was served to him. ‘Slow down,’ said Sarna, ‘You’ll give yourself indigestion!’ Parto took no notice of this, and continued to get his broth down him as fast as he could.

Once he had finished, to his surprise he found that there was writing on the bottom of his bowl. It said (in Krint): ‘DESTINY WILL FALL’ Now, Parto didn’t think much of this. He just thought that it was just an odd saying that the owners of the tavern had had printed onto their bowls. Still, he showed everyone else what it said.

‘Hmm,’ said Gramshaw, ‘That is indeed an odd thing to write on a bowl.’

The next to finish their broth was Prion. In his bowl were written the words: ‘YOU MUST GO TO DRYDONIA’ Now this did start to concern him, and he showed the others. ‘Why would they have something like that written on their bowls?’

‘I’m not sure,’ said Gramshaw. ‘I can’t see any reason as to why they would do so.’ He was the next to finish, and in his bowl were written the words, ‘YOU MUST GET THERE BY TONIGHT’ As he showed the others he said, ‘I’m not sure how, but I think someone is trying to send us a message for some purpose.’

‘Yeah,’ said Parto, ‘That may be so. But whoever they are, they must be crazy. It’s impossible for us to get to Drydonia by tonight. We won’t even reach Allana for a few days yet!’

Sarna continued to eat her broth, but she was apprehensive, knowing that there would most likely be another part of the message at the bottom of her bowl. This was indeed the case, as written in her bowl were the words, ‘MEET ME AT THE TAVERN IN KRACTO’ Kracto was a nearby village, only about two hours walk away, but due west rather than the southerly

direction they were taking to get back to Allana. ‘What do you think?’ she asked. ‘Do you think we should go?’

‘I’m, really not sure,’ said Parto, ‘I think that we should just forget all of this business and concentrate on getting home.’

Gramshaw then said, ‘I think that, in the absence of a plan to get through the border to Allana, we should go to Kracto. I believe that we have little to lose in going there, but we might gain some answers as to what it is we seem to have found ourselves caught up in.’

‘Agreed,’ said Prion. ‘Sarna, what do you think?’

‘I think we should go. It might be Lisa who’s calling out to us.’ Parto looked up when she said this, and found himself convinced.

Prion then declared, ‘Then we will go.’

They quickly gathered their things and left the tavern. But, as they stood up to leave, Parto looked at the bowls again.

All of the writing had disappeared.

Lisa had taken Tom for a walk around Bentley Priory, which is in the north of Harrow, in what is known as the Green Belt which surrounds London. Tom remembered going for walks there when he was a child, although he couldn’t remember much about what the place actually looked like.

Eventually, when they reached Bentley Priory itself, he was impressed by the view that greeted him. They had a good view over a large part of north London. He wasn’t certain, but he thought that he could see the Telecoms Tower in the distance. But, closer than that, was the unmistakable sight of Wembley Stadium.

‘We’re here,’ said Lisa.

‘Here? What for?’

‘There is something that I need to do here. Come, sit down for a bit.’ She indicated for him to sit on the grass. As soon as they had sat down she placed her hands on either side of his face, looked into his eyes, and put him into a trance. ‘I want you to stay calm. I want you to think back to when it was we first met – on the steps at college, where you were concerned about what everyone would think about you. Think of that concern, the worry that it caused you. Think about what the worst case scenario could have been – everyone ridiculing you, your family not accepting you. Think of how bad things could have been.’

Now, think of me joining you on those steps. Listening to what you had to say. And then telling you that things were not as bad as they seemed. That people wouldn't hate you for what you were. That your friends and your family would be accepting of you, and of who you are.

'Think about all of the stress and the worry that you had lifting up from you. The relief that you felt. The happiness that came with it. The belief that you could carry on without fear, without worry. Think of the good that came of it. Think of me. Think of me helping you. Think about how much better you felt after having met me...'

Lisa slightly regretted having to do this. She felt that what she was saying was making her sound a little arrogant, not that he would remember what it was she was saying, nor would anyone else hear her. But it was necessary – she needed to put him into the state of mind that he felt once he knew that his troubles – at least the main one that he had the time – were over, and that he knew that this was due to help that he had received from her.

She could feel that his mind was now in that state. She knew that she had to do what she had to do quickly, as his mind wouldn't remain in this state for long. She stood up, and stood facing London, with her back towards Tom. She spread her arms wide and closed her eyes. She could feel the sense of contentment that Tom felt behind her. She absorbed that feeling into her, and then magnified it, projecting it out across London.

A large number of people across north London then felt this feeling themselves. Not too strongly, mind. Just a slight increase in their levels of happiness, but enough for them to perceive. It didn't reach everyone in the area – some people were too caught up in their troubles for this to have had an effect on them. But a lot of people did feel a little happier for a brief moment.

Because this feeling of well being was connected to her, Lisa was then able to channel this energy back to herself. In essence, she was taking a little bit of strength from all of the people that she had just touched. This wouldn't decrease their levels of happiness, just make them feel slightly more tired than they normally would. But the strength that she was absorbing was helping her to regain her lost strength. By the time the process was complete she was almost back to her former strength. There would still be a lot that she couldn't do – leaving the Earth of her own violation still wouldn't be possible – but there was now a lot more that she could do.

Once the process was complete she turned around and looked back at Tom. He was now coming out of his trance. 'Whoa,' he said, 'What just happened?'

'You were feeling a little woozy and had to sit down for a minute. You'll be OK now.' Tom accepted this without question. The feeling of contentment that he had felt during his trance was still lingering.

And so, dear reader, if you were in the north London area of this day, you yourself may have felt this brief moment of happiness. You may not have noticed it directly yourself if you did, so do not worry if you did not feel it. But those for whom it did effect will find themselves slightly weaker, but this is nothing to be concerned about, they will just feel slightly more tired than usual on Monday morning. If you yourself find that you are a little more tired than you usually are on Monday morning, then you were probably touched by Lisa, and for that you should feel pleased.

Naomi had travelled to a cafe in Elephant & Castle. She had often had dreams about this place, but had never known what they had meant, until now. As soon as she stepped into the cafe she saw him, the man from her dreams. The man known as Mr Ian Woon.

He appeared to be a man in his fifties of Caribbean descent. In fact, he was much older than this, *much* older, and his ancestors came from somewhere a lot further away than the Caribbean.

As soon as he saw Naomi he stood up. ‘Ah,’ he said, a large smile beaming across his face. ‘You are here at last!’

‘It’s good to finally meet you.’ She walked up to him and they hugged briefly.

‘Come, sit down, I think we have a lot to talk about.’

‘Yes, we do.’

‘How long ago did you meet him?’

‘It was yesterday, at exactly midday.’

‘And how is he coping?’

‘He’s doing OK. He’s at my house, resting.’

‘Good. And do you know who the girl is yet?’

‘No, not yet. I don’t think he himself has met her yet.’

‘And I take it that Welt is here as well?’

‘Yes, he was with him when I found him. I’m not sure where he is now.’

‘We have to assume that he is out there planning his next move. We still have a lot of work ahead of us. But before that I have some news for you as well.’

‘Oh yes, what’s that?’

‘Lisa is here.’

A smile spread across Naomi’s face. ‘She’s here? She’s really here? She’s alive!’

‘Yes, she is very much alive! I felt her arrive three days ago now. She must have come here with Welt. With her here we have a real chance of defeating him.’

‘What do you know about everyone else? The Watcher? The man by the waterfall? The one who sees all?’

‘I haven’t had word from any of them. And, anyway, what would they want with the likes of me, eh? No, it’s just you, me, and Lisa. But that should be plenty. Anyway, how are you doing?’

‘Good. It’s a relief to finally be awake. I was dormant for about fifteen years. It was amazing that I was completely oblivious to it all, and yet found myself in exactly the right place and at the right time.’

‘Well, it had been planned that way for a very long time. Now, we now need to decide on our next steps. Welt will be looking for a way to obtain the power of this planet. I do not feel that he has met the Dragon Keeper yet. I believe that the Dragon Keeper is still dormant. This gives us time. We have to find Lisa, and the girl. They could be anywhere on this world, but I believe that the plan was for the girl to be nearby, somewhere in the same city as your man. The girl and your man have to meet, and they have to meet before Welt can find the Dragon Keeper. Fortunately for us, Lisa will also be seeking to unite the two. You should therefore return to your man, protect him, and seek out Lisa and the girl. Remember, you are up against the clock – find the girl before Welt finds the Dragon Keeper.’

‘But what will we do about Welt? Is there anything that we can do to stop him, or even to slow him down?’

‘You leave Welt to me. I have a plan for him. It won’t stop him, not completely, but if it works it should give you some extra time to find the girl. But don’t waste any time. Once your man is strong enough you must seek out the girl.’

‘I understand.’ Naomi smiled again. ‘I’m sorry, I know that this is end of the world type stuff that we’re dealing with here, but it just feels so amazing to be awake! It’s real! It’s happening! It really is good to see you Ian.’

Ian smiled back at Naomi, ‘It’s good to see you too. And once all this is done you shall have your reward. Now go, you have work to do.’

Naomi got up and smiled once more, before leaving the cafe to return once more to Kilburn. Ian smiled after her.

I do not know what he was thinking, but I wish I did.

On Pyna the party quickly made their way to Kracto. Once they were there they quickly made their way towards its tavern. As soon as they were inside Parto asked, ‘So, who is it that we’re meant to be meeting here?’ The place was full of people, and no one was obviously waiting for them.

'I'm not sure,' said Prion. He looked around the room, and then he saw some words on a door, written in the same style as the words in the bowls. They said, 'THIS WAY', and beneath them was an arrow pointing to the right. He pointed at the words and said, 'At the risk of stating the obvious, I think we should go that way.' Prion duly led the party in the direction of the arrow.

The arrow pointed towards a door, and the party stepped through. Inside was a man dressed in a hooded robe. He turned to face the party and said, 'Ah, you've arrived. Good, now, stand in this circle please.' There was a circle marked out with chalk on the floor.

'I'm sorry,' said Prion, 'But who are you?'

'Never mind about me. We don't have time for that. Time is something that we are rapidly running out of. Now, step inside the circle.' The party just stood there looking at him. 'You need to step into the circle now! If we're to help Lisa to save the Earth you have to be in Drydonia, well, yesterday would have been ideal, but there will still be time if you can get there more or less now.'

Parto recognised that name, Earth – he had heard Lisa talk about it to Welt back on The Ledge. He looked at this man and said, 'Where is this Earth? I've never heard of it before all of this started.'

The man sighed, 'Of course you haven't heard of it! What does it matter if you have or not? Now, are you going to step into this circle, or am I going to have to force you into it?'

Parto still wasn't sure what to make of this man, but he had mentioned this place called the Earth that Lisa had spoken about. She had said that it was in danger, and that Welt was trying to get there. It seemed to him that stepping into this circle would somehow help towards them being to help Lisa, and so he was the first one to step inside.

The others, seeing Parto take the lead like this, and also wanting to help Lisa if they could, followed his lead.

The man then said, 'Finally! Now, once you're in Drydonia you must make your way to the cave. Do not delay, you must get there as fast as you can.'

'Cave?' queried Gramshaw. 'There are no caves in Drydonia.'

'You will know what I mean once you arrive there. Now, be gone!' He waved his arm, and suddenly he and the room disappeared.

In a flash the party now found themselves standing at the foot of a mountain. They were now in Drydonia, south of Allana. It was also dark – as well as shifting through space they had shifted through time as well, to late at night on that day, an unfortunate side effect of the man's teleportation method. Dear reader, I know you will probably be wondering as to who this man

is. Do not worry, I'm sure that we will be coming back to him before this tale has been told. But first we have more pressing matters to address.

Gramshaw looked up at the mountain and recognised it immediately. 'That's Mount Dynia! I don't know how he did it, but that man has sent us all the way to Drydonia.' As his eyes adjusted to the darkness he saw something new, something that he'd never seen before on his previous visits to Drydonia. There was a large hole in the side of the mountain. Or, more precisely, a cave had now appeared. 'Come on,' he said, 'There's the cave the man spoke of.'

Sarna asked, 'Should we just go up there without knowing what's in there? What if it's a trap?'

Prion answered, 'Somehow I don't think it is. I think Lisa has something to do with that cave, and we have to go there and do something for her. I don't know what, but maybe that will be clear when we get there. Come on, let's go.' He started to lead the party up the mountain.

They had only gone a few steps when an ear splitting warbling sound started up. It was the loudest sound that they had ever heard, with the pitch increasing and then decreasing. They had never heard of such a sound before. But, dear reader, if you had been there and if you had heard that sound I'd wager that you'd recognise it immediately, for the sound was exactly the same as one of your air raid sirens.

The sound itself was emanating from the cave. Prion looked back towards the others and shouted, 'I don't know what that noise is, but I don't think we should let it stop us from getting to that cave. We still need to go there, for Lisa's sake.'

The others all agreed, and they continued to make their way up the mountain.

Meanwhile, the siren continued to sound its alarm, which could be heard far and wide. In the city of Drydon, the capital city of Drydonia, everyone was awoken by it.

They had been dreading this day for over five hundred years.