

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 SIX

STEVE'S KNIGHT

The Other could smell her on this planet, even though she was far away. It could smell her, infesting the world. It could feel her changing what had been before. It could sense the Etiria, could sense what it could do. Using it she could find the way to defeat it. It therefore needed to find a weapon of its own to counter the Etiria.

To counter something that could foretell the future based on a course of action, the Other needed to find a way to alter the future itself in a way that the Etiria could not detect. The only way that it could do this was to shift its phase so that it faded from reality, into the space just beyond. The Etiria could only function on the plane of reality as it is known for most of the lesser beings.

As soon as the Other had shifted its phase she was aware of what it had done. The one of the All Seeing that favoured her saw this also. And both were afraid.

Even in its shifted state it could smell her.

And it was coming for her...

The Apocolynium – VI

When Steve woke up on the sixth day he was afraid. Welt had somehow kept him a prisoner for over two days now, and he wanted to get out. He needed to try and find a way to escape from Welt.

He was still none the wiser as to who he was or what he wanted. He had asked him outright during the first day of his imprisonment. Welt would only tell Steve his name, and that he had come from somewhere far away that needn't concern him. After that it was Welt who was asking all of the questions:

What languages are spoken on your world?

What countries are there here?

Who rules your country?

What is the name of this city?

How is it divided and run?

How does one travel around this city?

What sort of food do you eat here?

What items of clothing are common in this area?

What are the customs of your people?

What is this thing that you call the television?

How does it work?

How do you communicate with each other?

What is this thing you call a mobile phone?

How does it work?
What is a computer?
How does it work?
What is the internet?
What can it do?
What powers your planet?
What forms of magic are used here?
What gods do you believe in?
Who is Richard Dawkins?
What do people go to war for here?
How are your wars fought?
What was the greatest war fought on your world?
Who won and who lost?
How many lives were lost?
How does a nuclear bomb work?
Who has them on your world?
Where are they kept?

And on and on and on the questions went. Steve did his best to answer them all. As he answered each one he hoped that his ordeal would come to an end so that he could be rid of this man. But the questions just kept coming and coming and coming. He could make no sense as to why Welt was asking all of these questions, or to what purpose they would serve. He was convinced that Welt was mad and that he was dangerous. But Steve also felt that he himself was starting to go mad, as each question followed the last.

He got out of bed and stepped out into his hallway. There was another piece of paper on his doormat. He quickly went for it, hoping that it would provide a hint of his salvation. It contained a single word in large bold print: "TODAY"

Today... today... today... Could it really be all over today? He dearly hoped so. He couldn't endure another day of Welt and his incessant questioning. It was like torture. He couldn't take much more of that. His stress levels started to rise again. *No more questions*, he thought to himself. *Please, no more questions...*

He then heard Welt call out from the living room. 'Steve, come here.' Once again, he put the piece of paper into his dressing gown pocket and walked into his living room, where Welt was staying.

Welt had changed into some clothes that he had demanded that Steve gave him. Fortunately for Welt they fitted him reasonably well. When he saw Steve he said, 'Now, today you are going to take me outside. You are to show me your shops and your restaurants. I want to see your train stations. And I wish to travel on your Underground. I wish to visit Trafalgar Square. I wish to see your parliament. We will leave in one hour. Now, fetch me my breakfast.'

Without saying a word Steve went into the kitchen to cook Welt's breakfast. Welt had become fond of beans on toast for some reason. Steve was relieved that he wasn't going to be stuck inside all day and forced to answer a load of stupid questions. But he then quickly realised that Welt was probably going to pummel him with a load more questions whilst they were out. At least they would be outside. Maybe he would even have a chance to run away and escape, if his legs would obey him.

After they had eaten and Steve had washed and dressed Welt informed him that it was time to leave. 'I wish to walk to your town centre.' Steve just nodded at this. When he normally went to the town centre he normally took the 186 bus. But if Welt wanted to walk there, then they would walk there.

Stepping outside of his flat was a huge relief – it was his first breath of fresh air for two days. But, despite the fact that he was now outside of his flat, he knew that he was still a prisoner.

He started to lead Welt towards the town centre. He decided that the quickest way to get there would be to go down Kenmore Avenue and under the railway bridge – this was the same bridge that Lisa had walked under just before she got to the park on her first night back on Earth.

As they made their way to Kenmore Avenue Welt started with the questions again. 'What shops do you recommend that we go to in the town centre?'

'It depends on what it is you want.'

'I would like to purchase weapons. I am particularly interested in guns.'

Steve was taken aback by this. What was he going to use a gun for? Steve felt decidedly uneasy about this. 'They don't sell guns in Harrow.'

'Then where can we go to purchase a gun?'

Steve couldn't think of anywhere where you could buy a gun, and so he just said, 'I don't know. And, anyway, you'd need a licence if you wanted a gun, and they take time to get.' He decided that it was probably best if he didn't add to that the fact that Welt was highly unlikely to be granted such a licence.

Welt decided to pass on the idea of getting a gun, at least for the time being. He then asked, 'Then what weapons may I purchase?'

'You can't really buy weapons. It's not really something that they sell in Harrow.' The thought occurred to Steve that you could buy knives – sharp kitchen knives – in Harrow, and they could effectively be used as weapons, but he didn't want to tell Welt this. Fortunately for him Welt's powers only prevented Steve from escaping. Welt was unable to tell when Steve was holding something back from him.

Welt then asked, 'So, what can I purchase from Harrow?'

'Well, books, DVDs, computer games, toys, clothes, stuff like that.'

'Pah! Hardly worth my effort. What a waste of a town. Who could conceive of such a thing, a town where you can't buy weapons? And for such a warlike people as yourselves! Obviously Harrow is weak and pathetic.' Steve had nothing to say in response to this. Clearly, after two days of asking questions, Welt was still clueless about how things worked around here.

Thankfully Welt had fallen silent, at least for now. Steve now thought about how he might try and get away from Welt. He couldn't rely on his legs taking him away, he knew that they would probably stubbornly refuse to take him away in the same way that his hands would refuse to open the door to his flat, dial a telephone number, or write an e-mail during the last two days.

As they got to the end of Kenmore Avenue they crossed over a small roundabout and continued on. A short distance ahead of them was the park that Lisa had visited. As they got closer to it Welt started to sniff the air. He realised that there was another power that he had gained since coming to Earth – his sense of smell had heightened, to the point where he could detect the scent of individuals. And there was one smell that was starting to come through clearly.

As they got to the park he started running into it. Steve couldn't understand this, but then nothing that Welt said or did made any sense to him. Welt ran over to a bench and started to sniff it. This happened to be the bench that Lisa had sat on. Even though that had been two days ago Welt was still able to detect that she had been there. Despite the fact that he wouldn't have been able to smell here when they were back on Pyna, he still somehow knew that this smell belonged to her. It was too clear and pure, completely unlike the smells that the humans had.

'She was here!' he said aloud. 'She was here! She's followed me here! Curses! CURSES!' He knew that her very presence here would not bode well for his plans, and that she would do all that she could to try and thwart them. He started to sniff the air to see if he could try and tell where she was now, but he could not. The only source of the smell was emanating from the bench.

Welt started to panic. It wasn't fair that she was here. It simply wasn't fair! Before, when he had believed that he had come here alone, he believed that he was the only person currently on the planet that knew of its power and what it could potentially be used for. This in and of itself gave him a status above that of all of its inhabitants. But now that he knew that she, too, was here, he knew that that was no longer true. She knew of it as well. In fact, not only did she know if it, she probably knew what it was that he had to do to get the Earth's power. And, if she knew that, then she could stop him before he could even find out for himself what it was that he needed to do. And that wasn't fair, he felt. He felt that the power rightfully belonged to him, and he and he alone was going to be the one to get it.

Steve found himself asking Welt, 'Is everything OK?' He tried to get his legs to just carry him away from here, but he found that he couldn't. And because he wanted to get away from this strangeness he felt that he should talk to Welt, as that might be able to get them moving again. And as long as they were moving he might find a way to finally get away from him.

Welt gathered his senses and said, 'Yes, I'm fine. Let's continue. He walked back to the road, and they walked under the bridge, and on to the town centre.

The town centre was as busy as it normally was for a Saturday morning. As they started to pass other people Steve wanted to talk to them, to ask them to help him. But he found that he couldn't, in the same way that he couldn't summon help from outside when Welt had him trapped in his flat. He formed the words that he wanted to say in his mind but they just wouldn't come out of his mouth, not matter how much he willed them to.

So all he could say instead was, 'So, where do you want to go now that we're here?'

'We can forget your shops, they will not have anything of use to me. And I don't care for your restaurants either. You will take me to the nearest train station, and from there you will take me to Trafalgar Square.' Welt had been intrigued by Trafalgar Square. As part of his questioning of Steve over the past two days he had found out that the road signs that they have in the UK that point towards London all measure the distance to London as what the distance is to Trafalgar Square. Welt sensed that this must mean that Trafalgar Square was at the heart of the city, and therefore had some major significance to the city, possibly one that could help to lead him to the Earth's power. He didn't really know how that could be, but he was prepared to look everywhere and do whatever it took to locate this power. After everything that he had heard from Steve about London, its history, and its place in the world, he felt convinced that he would be bound to find something relating to the Earth's power somewhere within the city.

Steve took Welt to Harrow-on-the-Hill station, which was on the Metropolitan Line. Normally, if he was wanting to travel to Trafalgar Square, he would go from Harrow-on-the-Hill.

He would normally take a bus to Harrow and Wealdstone station, take a London Midland train to Euston, and then the Northern Line to Charing Cross. But now that they were here he thought for a moment as he tried to figure out the best route, and decided to take a Metropolitan Line train to Baker Street, and then a Bakerloo Line train to Charing Cross.

He turned to Welt and said, 'Wait here whilst I get you a ticket.'

'What do I need a ticket for?'

'Without a ticket you can't go on the train.' Steve sighed. It was like he was taking a small child out for the day.

After he had bought a ticket for Welt (he bought a paper ticket rather than pay the deposit for an Oyster card for him) he led Welt through the barrier and on to the platform. A train was already waiting on the platform. Steve rushed down the stairs and on to the train. He hoped against hope that the train's doors would close just behind him, before Welt could get on the train, and would carry him away from him forever, freeing him from his grasp.

Unfortunately, he had no such luck. When Welt saw him rushing for the train he knew that he would need to start running for it as well, and as such was right behind Steve as he stepped onto the train. A few seconds later the doors closed, and the train started on its way.

Welt looked at Steve and said, 'This is good. You will tell me more about this train.'

Steve had had enough, and then an idea came to him. He whispered in Welt's ear, 'People are not supposed to talk on trains. They remain silent as a mark of respect.' To his relief Welt just nodded, and fell silent. Steve breathed a sigh of relief. He felt that he had won a small victory. Despite the hold that Welt had over him, it would appear that he could still be easily fooled.

That aside, he was still trapped as he couldn't get away from Welt. He would have to take him all the way to Trafalgar Square, and wherever else he wanted to go. He wondered if Welt was going to want to go to all of the tourist hotspots. If so that was going to be a very long day. He wasn't even sure if they could all be done in a day.

And he still didn't know why he wanted to go to these places. He didn't know what Welt was trying to achieve. From what he could see Welt was little more than a mad man. If he didn't escape from him soon he didn't know what it would lead to next. Was he going to want Steve to go and take him to other cities? Was he going to want Steve to go and take him to other *countries*? If so, how would he react when he told him that he would need a passport for that, and that he would be unlikely to get one as it doesn't appear that he would have the necessary documentation in order to acquire one?

He was worried about how Welt might react when he found out that he wouldn't be able to have everything that he wanted. He had already been concerned by his reaction when he found out that he wouldn't be able to buy any sort of weapons from Harrow. The very fact that he wanted weapons in the first place concerned him. What would he do when he encountered other disappointments? Steve felt genuinely concerned that when that happened Welt might start to actually harm him directly, rather than simply keeping him as a prisoner.

They stayed silent until the train arrived at Baker Street. Once they stepped off of the train Welt asked, 'Which way is it to Trafalgar Square?'

Steve replied, 'Calm down, we're not there yet. We have to go and take another train.' He then led Welt down the steps and then the escalator that took them down to the Bakerloo Line platform. Once on the platform he looked at the information board, and saw that they would have to wait about three minutes for the next train, and so he led Welt down the platform a little bit.

Welt asked, 'How far is it to Trafalgar Square?'

'We'll need to go four stops to Charing Cross.'

'And how long will that take us?'

'No more than about ten minutes or so, once the train gets here.' Steve was once more finding all of these questions tedious. He swore that he would pull his hair out if, once they were on the train, Welt were to start asking if they were there yet.

The train arrived on the platform and they stepped on board. Thankfully, Welt remained silent as 'a mark of respect' although there were some others on the train that were chatting amongst each other. Welt gave them a filthy look, which Steve could tell was starting to freak them out a little bit. He hoped that they would not start talking to Welt, confronting him about why he was staring at them. If they did that things would start to get awkward. And if Welt worked out that he had lied to him about the need to stay silent on trains he was worried about what he might do to him.

Thankfully the people Welt was looking at didn't say anything, and a short while later the train came into Charing Cross. As they stepped off of the train Welt said to Steve, 'You have some very rude people in London.'

'Yeah, I know...' Steve didn't elaborate further. The other people on the train hadn't been rude in the slightest, they weren't even talking that loudly.

They quickly made their way out of the station, and on to Trafalgar Square. 'Ah!' said Welt as he saw it for the first time, 'We are here!' A smile spread across his face. Steve was indifferent,

he'd seen Trafalgar Square many times before, and cared little for it now. It was no longer fun since they had got rid of all of the pigeons.

Welt started to run around the square like a small child, and Steve just left him to it. He tried to see if he could run away, to get away from Welt, but, again, his legs would not obey him. He tried to see if he could tell one of the passersby about his predicament, but, again, his lips would not obey him. He was still trapped.

Welt, for his part, soon started to feel disappointment after his initial joy. He expected to feel some sort of power once he arrived at Trafalgar Square, or at least get some sort of indication of what he was to do next to secure the Earth's power. But he felt nothing whatsoever. Not a thing. It was then that he stopped seeing Trafalgar Square as special, and just saw it as an area made of stone filled with insignificant people.

He walked back to Steve and said, 'There's nothing here. Take me to your parliament.'

Without saying another word, Steve started to lead Welt away from Trafalgar Square, crossing the roads, and then leading him down Whitehall.

After they had gone a short distance Welt pointed towards the Cenotaph and asked, 'What's that?'

'It's the Cenotaph, it commemorates our war dead. It will have special significance next week as it will be Remembrance Day, which is why you can see lots of people wearing poppies at the moment.' Welt nodded his approval of this.

Before they passed the Cenotaph they paused by the gates to Downing Street. 'So, this is Downing Street?' Welt asked.

'Yes, it is.'

'Can we walk down it?'

'I'm afraid not. You used to be able to a long time ago, but not anymore. It's a security thing.'

'I see. That's because your Prime Minister lives there, isn't it?'

'That's right.'

'David Cameron?'

'Yes.'

'And you voted for him?'

'Well, I didn't personally vote for him, but, yeah, he was elected.'

Welt shook his head in bewilderment. He found the idea of a country voting to choose their leader completely baffling. Surely the leader should be whoever is the strongest amongst the people?

They continued on down Whitehall. Welt asked, ‘What’s this building?’ referring to the building that was now on their right.

‘That’s the Foreign Office. And next to that will be the Treasury.’

Welt then lost all interest in those buildings as he looked across the road and saw that they were coming up to the Palace of Westminster. ‘Ah, your parliament building, correct?’

‘Yes.’

‘That is where all the important decisions pertaining to the running of your country are taken?’

‘More or less.’

‘We will go inside.’

‘Actually, I’m not sure if we’ll be able to...’ Steve was aware that sometimes visitors could go inside the Houses of Parliament, but he didn’t know if today would be one of those times.

‘Nonsense! You will find a way.’

Great, Steve thought. *Now he wants me to break into parliament for him.* He didn’t know how to respond to Welt. But he now wanted to get away more than ever.

They crossed the road so that they were on the opposite side of Whitehall, and were now approaching the corner just before the Palace of Westminster itself. As they reached the corner six things happened virtually simultaneously.

The first of these things is that Big Ben started to chime the hour – it was 12pm.

The second of these things is that Steve bumped into a woman in her twenties who was walking around the corner.

The third of these things occurred as soon as Steve and the woman made contact. Something inside her mind unlocked, and she *remembered*, and I *saw it* for the first time. She knew exactly who Steve was, who Welt was, including where he was from and why he was here, and she knew that Steve was trapped.

The fourth thing to happen was that Welt felt a searing pain inside of his head. He placed his hands to his temples and fell to the ground.

The fifth thing to happen was that his hold over Steve was broken. Steve could feel this, could feel that his body would start to fully obey his commands once more.

And the sixth thing to happen didn’t happen on Earth. On Pyna, in the Drydonian mountains, which lay to the south of Allana, a large rock fell off of Mount Dynia, unveiling the entrance to a cave that had long been sealed up. There was no one on Pyna who witnessed this event.

After all of these things took place the woman took Steve’s hand and said, ‘We have to run.’

Steve, who was keen to escape from Welt as quickly as he could, was more than happy to go with the woman. She led him into Westminster station, through the barriers (Steve quickly getting his Oyster card out of his pocket so he could pass through the barrier), and down through the station to the Jubilee line. They got on the first westbound train and sat down.

Once they did Steve said, 'Thanks for that, whatever it was you did. My name's Steve, by the way.'

'I know. I was sent to help you, only I didn't know that until now. My name's Naomi Worn, and I'm your knight.'

'My knight?'

Naomi started to speak more quietly. 'It's a long story, I can't really explain it here. I'll tell you some of what I can once we get back to my place.'

'And where's that?'

'Kilburn. Shush now, you need to rest. You've had quite an ordeal.'

After his sudden burst of energy Steve did feel very weak. He suddenly felt the need to fall asleep, but found that he couldn't whilst he was on the train.

But his mind was at a loss to try and work everything out. The whole thing with Welt just did not make sense, and now he had been saved by a strange woman calling herself his knight, and taking him back to her house.

By the time the train arrived at Kilburn he was exhausted. Naomi had to help him off of the train and then to her house, which fortunately was just a short distance from the train.

Once they were inside she led him to her spare room, and lay him on the bed. She removed his shoes and helped him into the bed. As soon as his head hit the pillow he fell asleep.

He slept for the rest of the day.