

# 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](http://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](http://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 SIXTEEN**

**THE CAVE INSTRUCTS**

*The philosopher thought that perhaps she was being more truthful than she realised when she said that she felt that she had the whole universe inside of her head. He theorised that maybe everyone in this world, and this universe, were all really part of her mind, and that she was living her life here. She seemed to know everything about this universe, more than she would have been expected to know.*

*But then, why would she be living her life here? And what would the universe that existed beyond her mind be like? Would it be like this universe? Or would it be so terrible that she found that she had to flee inside her own mind to escape it?*

*He then continued to think further. If this universe did just exist within her mind, then it was theoretically possible that there could be other universes that would exist within the minds of the beings that lived in this universe. There may even be one within his own mind.*

*As he continued to think about it, concentrating on the idea, eventually, it became so...*

## The Apocolynium – XVI

By the sixteenth day Prion, Sarna, Parto, and Gramshaw hadn't left the mouth of the crystal cave in over a week. But then they had no need to. It provided them with everything that they needed. It gave them all of the food and drink that they wanted. It gave them soft beds for them to sleep on. It would maintain a comfortable temperature for them. It would provide them with books to read, and would play them music to listen to. All the time they were amazed at how it was able to do this. But they also wondered as to why they were being treated in this manner.

It was Gramshaw that was most suspicious about the cave. 'I don't like what this place is doing,' he said back on the twelfth day. 'It's catering to our every whim. Here we could want for nothing. But to what purpose is it doing this? Why are we being treated like this? I know that we're "The Chosen Ones" and we're going to have to go and do something that is meant to save the Earth. But is this place trying to weaken us, in order to lay a trap for us? Or is it giving us one last moment of happiness before we are sent on a task that will lead to almost certain death? Whatever it is, all of this luxury will come at a price. I only hope that it is not too dear.'

Parto then said, 'I wouldn't worry about it. I haven't been able to eat this well since... well... ever! We should just take things as they come. We should enjoy this whilst we can. If we just spend the whole time worrying about it we'll miss it once it's gone, and regret not having enjoyed it whilst we could. I don't like the idea of what we may have to next any more than you do, but worrying about it isn't going to stop it from happening! Let's just hope that we can stay here for as long as we can. You've heard what the people have said – they don't know if they're going to

be here for three days, three years, three decades, or three generations! Well, it's been more than three days, and we're still here!

Sarna then said, 'I certainly hope that it's not for three generations...' Being the only girl in the group this prospect had her particularly worried.

Prion then said, 'It's not so much the way we're being treated that worries me so much, but what it is the Drydonians are being asked to do. What is this place going to do with all of this crystal? What is it going to be used for? The longer that we stay here, the more crystal that will be mined. And as it gets more and more crystal, I get more and more concerned as to what it is it is going to use that crystal for.'

For their part, the Drydonians had all been working hard. They worked around the clock. Each quarter of the city worked for the equivalent of eight of your hours per day for three days before taking a day's break. There were always three of the quarters working for eight separate hours each day. During each shift they staggered their breaks, and so at all times there were people mining for the crystal.

Every man, woman, and child was involved. The men did most of the heavy work, breaking into the crystal at the deepest level of the mine where it was hardest. The women mainly set to work at breaking down the larger crystals into smaller ones, as well as working on the softer parts of the mine. The children mainly helped to ferry the crystals back to the chutes at the entrance, and bring refreshments back to those who were working. The elderly were also involved. They mainly worked to co-ordinate everyone else, making sure that everyone did their bit, but also took their breaks. They also made sure that, as the mine got deeper, the walls of the mines were supported so that they did not collapse. They would see where the supports were needed, and get others to help them to fetch the wood from a store room within the cave and then make the supports.

The elderly also helped to look after the younger children who were unable to partake in any of the mining operation. Some of these younger children assisted in the Drydonians living quarters. These consisted of four vast caverns, one for each quarter of the city. Here there were the same comfortable beds that the party at the cave's entrance were used to, and food and drink was also provided for the Drydonians by the cave, although it was plainer and less plentiful than what our party received. Nevertheless, the Drydonians were more than satisfied with what they were given.

They also were given books to read, and music was also played to them. Groups of Drydonians also got together to put on shows. Some were dramatic, and some were comedic. But there was a great sense of camaraderie amongst all of the Drydonians. For centuries they had

been dreading the moment that the siren sounded, but now they were finding that they were actually enjoying the task that they had been set. Yes, the work was hard, but it was no harder than the work that they had been doing previously. And the crystal cave truly was a magnificent place to be. There were many Drydonians who felt that they would be perfectly content to live here for the rest of their lives.

Prince Gratson was also involved in the operation. He assisted each of the twelve shifts at various points, working as hard as his own people. The people saw this and were appreciative of his efforts. He ate the same food that they ate, and slept in the same beds that they slept in. They were all in this together.

The prince was the only one of the Drydonians who went to see the party by the cave's entrance. He told them about the legends that had instructed them to come to the caves. They said that long ago, when Drydonia was founded, the first prince made a pact with a goddess. She would help to protect Drydon and the surrounding areas. She would allow the city to prosper, and protect it from fires, floods, high winds, and earthquakes. Its fields would always be fertile, and each harvest would be plentiful, provided that the Drydonians worked hard.

But this didn't come for free. In return for this protection and prosperity the Drydonians would one day be called in to repay their debt. They were informed that at midnight on the first day when they would have to repay their debt they would hear a siren call out to them. Upon hearing the siren, every man, woman, and child would have to travel to the mountains. There, the current prince would have to climb Mount Dynia, and enter a newly formed cave, where they would receive instructions as to what the people were to do next.

They would have work to perform, and it would be hard work. They would be called to perform this work because a world known as the Earth would be in great danger. The work that they would be performing would be one link in a long chain of events that was required if the Earth were to be saved. At the same time that the sirens sounded, four chosen ones would appear at Mount Dynia. The legends didn't say what tasks these chosen ones would be required to perform.

The legends then said that if the Drydonians failed to perform their task, then the Earth would be doomed, and that once the Earth was gone, Pyna would also be doomed, and everyone on Pyna would know that their world would end because of the failure of the Drydonians.

No one had known when it was that the siren was going to sound. Everyone had always hoped that the task would fall to the next generation to perform. When the siren did finally sound everyone was afraid, not knowing what work it was they would have to perform. But, now they were here, the people were glad to be performing the work. They felt that they were serving

the whole of Pyna and the world known as the Earth. In the preceding years and centuries many people had wondered if the Earth even existed, but as other parts of the legends have proven to be correct recently, there now wasn't anyone that doubted that the Earth did, in fact, exist, and was now in very grave danger. The people were more than willing to work as hard as they could to perform their duty. They saw it as an honour and a responsibility. They didn't want anyone on Pyna to ever say that the Drydonians had failed them.

The party believed that there was truth in this prophecy. They had heard of the Earth before. They didn't know where it was or why it was so important, but they had heard Lisa speak of it, shortly before she disappeared. They were all aware that once the mining was complete they were going to have to perform some task that was connected to the Earth, although quite what that would be they had no idea.

On the sixteenth day, eight days after the mining had started, the prince came to see the party again. He said, 'I believe that as we continue with this task we are improving at it. I would swear that we're now mining twice as much crystal than when we started.'

'That is good news,' said Prion. 'It should cut down the time it takes to get the required amount. How are your people coping?'

'Remarkably well. I do believe that some of them are actually enjoying this.'

'That can be no bad thing.'

'Indeed. Although, they may come to miss it once the task is over and we return to our old lives.'

'Maybe it won't be over for a long time. Your legends don't say how long it is to be for.'

'True, but I feel that the task will be over sooner rather than later. You said that you had met with Lisa, and that she had spoken of the Earth shortly before she vanished. I feel that whatever it is that this cave intends to do it will be soon. I suspect that Lisa will be in great need of assistance, wherever she now is.'

He stayed with the party for a while. Then, late that evening, they were all alarmed when another siren sounded out. It was just as loud as the first siren that they had heard over a week previously, but whilst the first siren had risen and fallen in pitch, this one sounded out at one continuous pitch. You, dear reader, would recognise it as an all clear siren, and would not have been overly surprised at it after the first siren had sounded like an air raid siren.

The prince shouted above the noise, 'I have to go, my people will be panicking.'

Of this he was correct. There was indeed panic when the second siren sounded. The Drydonians had just been getting accustomed to the work that they had been asked to do. They had become used to the routine, and expected that they may have to follow this routine for some

time to come. Now here was something that was upsetting that routine, and it scared them. They didn't know what this second siren meant, and they were afraid that it was going to signal the start of a new, significant, hardship for them.

The prince ran as fast as he could, back to the cave's living quarters. Those who had been asleep were now fully awake, and those that had been mining had stopped and were slowly walking towards the living quarters, wondering what this new siren meant.

The prince met with the four council leaders. 'What does this mean?' asked Macron.

'I'm afraid that I do not have the answer for that.'

Gravalon then said, 'We have failed! We have failed! I know we have! We are inferior and have failed to carry out the task satisfactory and now the Earth is doomed, and so is Pyna, and all of Drydonia will be punished for our failings!'

'Enough, Gravalon!' snapped the prince. 'Don't let the people hear you speak like that. Now I know of no reason how we could have failed with this task. We have carried out the instructions that we were given, and we have done them to the best of our ability. We have improved the rate at which we are able to mine the crystal, to the point that it is now flowing almost constantly down the chutes. No, whatever it is that this siren means we can still be proud of what we have done. Nobody has failed us.'

Draxto then asked, 'But what *does* it mean? The legends said nothing about a second siren!'

'We will just have to wait and see what happens now. In the meantime we all have to stay calm!'

Rapprov then suggested, 'Perhaps the siren doesn't mean that we are now to face a new hardship, but merely indicates that we have now mined sufficient crystal for whatever purpose it is required for?'

The others all fell silent when Rapprov suggested this, and then, seconds later, the sirens died down.

Then the voice of the cave spoke, and could be heard throughout the cave. It said, 'The Chosen Ones are to go to the living quarters. The Chosen Ones are to go to the living quarters...'

Back at the cave's entrance the party heard this command. Prion said, 'Well, here we go. We should now find out what is going to happen to us next.' The party got up, and walked through the door at the back of the cave's entrance.

As they did so Parto said, 'There goes the good life. It was good whilst it lasted.'

They were able to find the living quarters quickly. The Drydonians all stood apart to let them pass, some of them bowing their heads as they did so. The party walked towards the centre of the living quarters, where the prince and the council leaders were waiting for them. The

chambers for each of the four quarters were all around them, and in the centre a circle could be made out on the ground.

The cave's voice then said, 'Stand outside of the circle.' They all did so. Once they were clear, a whirring, mechanical sound could be heard. The ground within the circle then began to open up like a door, the ground going inwards and downwards. Steam could be seen and felt coming out of the hole in the ground. Everyone nearby could tell that it was fiercely hot inside the hole.

The party peered over the edge. They could see that something was slowly rising up to meet them. It was a platform with a table on it, all made from crystal. Once it got to the top they could see that the table had four necklaces on it. Each necklace had one fairly sizable crystal on it, about five centimetres long and two centimetres wide. Only these crystals didn't look like any of the other crystals in the cave. They somehow seemed to be purer.

The cave's voice then said, 'The Chosen Ones will now put on the necklaces, which have been formed from the crystals that the citizens of Drydonia have mined.' The party went up to them. When they picked them up they found that they were far heavier than they would have expected them to be. Not so heavy that they couldn't put them on, but heavy enough so that they would notice them.

Once they had them on the cave's voice spoke again, saying, 'The crystals were imbued with a power shortly after they were mined, and then they were formed into the crystals that The Chosen Ones now wear. The Chosen Ones will now travel to the port of Nilona in the country of Allana, where they will sail to the port of Returia in the country of Holimia. They will then travel to the Holim Mountains. Their task will then be made clear to them there. The citizens of Drydonia will accompany them to Nilona and ensure that they safely board their ship. Once they have done that their service will be considered complete. They will be free to return to Drydon, and, as a reward for their service, they will also be free to live in these caves, where they will be provided for, if they so wish.

'The Chosen Ones will leave at once.' After that the cave's voice spoke no more.

'Great,' said Parto, 'We *still* don't know what we're supposed to be doing at the end of all of this!'

Gramshaw then said, 'At least we will be moving on from this place, and getting closer to our eventual goal.'

Prince Gratson then approached the party, 'It will be an honour for us to accompany you. It will take us just over a day to take you to the Allanan border, and then Nilona will only be a

short distance after that. With a good ship you'll be in Returia a day after that, and the Holim Mountains are just outside of Returia.'

Prion said, 'Thank you, your highness. You people have indeed served us well. As we have been instructed, we should leave at once.'

The party then walked out of the living quarters, followed by the prince and the council leaders. Then, behind them, the citizens of Drydon followed, and all of them were silent. They were pleased that they had completed the main part of their task successfully, and did not begrudge the long walk to Nilona to accompany The Chosen Ones, and ensure that their journey continues on safely. They did not know what the crystals would do, or what their purpose was, but they felt that they contained a great power. They all hoped that it would be enough to save the Earth from whatever peril it was in.

They all exited the cave and started to walk in the direction of the Allanan border. The prince and the council leaders continued to walk behind the party, but the citizens of Drydon, as well as walking behind them, started to also walk to the left and right of them.

The sun was starting to set in the west, which was broadly the direction that they were walking in. It was a warm evening, and there was barely a cloud in the red sky. The party felt a sense of peace surround them, as everyone walked in solemn silence. But they felt that a great storm was coming in their lives. That they had indeed been provided with one last period of enjoyment and pleasure during their time in the cave. That soon the real work that they would have to do would begin. That this work would be of vital importance to Lisa, to the Earth, to Pyna, and beyond. They knew that this work would be dangerous. So dangerous that they may not return from it.

They therefore took care to enjoy this sunset, in case it happened to be the last one that they ever saw.