

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 TWENTY-FOUR

THE STAND

And so she left the universe of her mind, and borrowed its power to set herself free. She was finally able to escape from the basement in which she had been held. Once she was free she felt her original powers returning to her.

But her immediate fear upon emerging from the basement was that the Other was still after her. She didn't know how far away it was, and so the first thing that she did was to flee.

She fled to a world known as the Earth. Whilst this world did have life on it, when she arrived intelligent life was still in its earliest stages.

The one of the All Seeing that had helped her made his own way to the Earth. He met with her there and told her that the time for running was over. It was now time to stand up and face the Other. He told her that it would be here soon. As soon as they were prepared he would be able to summon it and they would deal with it once and for all.

And so she prepared herself for the fight...

The Apocolynium – XXIV

The man and the Dragon Keeper quickly made their way down the road, heading in the same direction that Lisa and her companions had headed in earlier, keeping up the same blistering pace that the man had been making earlier. The Dragon Keeper was unsure as to what it was that was going to happen next, but she could feel the anticipation. Even though she didn't have the power of foresight, she still knew that something very important was going to happen today.

The man turned left at the same point as Lisa and her companions, going down Old Redding, past The Case is Altered, and into the car park.

Just as the man was approaching the turning into Old Redding Lisa and her companions all heard the voices of the crystals say, 'He is coming. He is nearly here. Prepare yourselves.' They then all stood in a line, watching the entrance to the car park. Some of them had been starting to get restless, wondering just how long it would be before something actually happened. Now that they knew that the man was almost here they were anxious, and even a little afraid. They knew how important this was, that they couldn't afford to make any mistakes here. It wasn't just their lives that were at risk, it was the fate of Earth, the fate of Pyna, and the fate of all of the inhabited worlds of this universe that were at risk.

Then, a short while afterwards, they saw the man and the Dragon Keeper enter the car park. As soon as he saw Lisa he pointed his arm out towards her. She pointed his arm out towards him. They were both directing energy towards each other, each hoping to harm the other. But

even though Lisa now had the power of the crystals within her they found that they were cancelling each other out, she was only matching the power that the man had.

The man said, 'Out of my way! I haven't come this far to be stopped by you. I will eliminate you, take the key, and then the power of this world.'

'I'm not going to let you,' said Lisa. 'I have defended this world and all of the others in this universe my whole life, and I'm not going to let you harm a single one of them.'

'Is that so? Then where have you been for the past thousand years? I understand that you had a bit of a run in with Marloki.'

'Yes, I did. But I dealt with it. Yes, it came at a cost, but that cost was worth it. If I hadn't have done what I did then Pyna would have been in ruins. Instead, it prospers.'

'But does it really? How free are the people of Pyna? Isn't everything that they've done predetermined? Aren't the All Seeing just watching them go about their lives, already knowing what is going to happen next?'

'I know that sometimes things need to change, that things sometimes need to be different. But the differences that will be unleashed if you take the power of this world will be too great to bear. They will cause too much suffering. It is far better that the people of this universe are happy in a predetermined path, than unhappy and suffering in a random one.'

'And yet you yourself still chose to meddle, to bring in random elements yourself?'

'Yes, but I only do so to make the lives of the people that I meet better, to increase their levels of happiness. I care about these people. I care about what happens to them. Can you say the same thing?'

'Why do you care about them so much? They are just insects to us. Toys to be played with. No, helping them live their insignificant lives, making them happy, what is the purpose in that? I intend to take the power of this world and cause chaos, to make the ultimate differences to this universe, to make things interesting once more. And then I will harness all of the power of that chaos and take it to the other universes. Chaos will reign throughout. Things will no longer be predetermined. And then the All Seeing will be forced into action rather than just watching!'

The Dragon Keeper was listening to this intently. And she wasn't entirely happy with what it was that she was hearing. Whilst it had always been her intention to take the power of the Earth, she wasn't intending to use it purely for the purposes of causing chaos. Yes, whilst it would indeed cause the end of this world, it was one world that she was prepared to sacrifice. Her intention was to use the Earth's power to spread out throughout the cosmos, and rule all of the inhabited worlds. She would find ways to link them all. The All Seeing were intent on letting the inhabited worlds all exist separately from each other, rarely ever coming into contact with each

other. She wanted to rule them all, to take the strengths from each of the worlds, to merge them together to create the ultimate society, one that was capable of anything that it wanted, and with her at the top of that society, ruling all of it. Yes, there would be casualties along the way, a great many of them. But that was a price worth paying to achieve perfection.

But now she was hearing what the plans of this man were for the very first time, and she didn't like what it was that she was hearing. When she had first encountered him he had directed her to the Earth, telling her to obtain its power, which would happen when her human form, Claire, encountered a being known as Welt. She would then need to follow a predetermined course of action which would result in her having the Earth's power. The plan was that she would then execute the rest of her plan, to create a perfect society. But now she wasn't so sure that was what the true intentions of this man were. Now she suspected that he was simply using her, using the special power that she had, the power that gave her the title of the Dragon Keeper, just to obtain the Earth's power for his own means.

She could also see that he was struggling. In order to obtain the randomness that he sought for in the universe, he had to contend with the randomness himself. He hadn't been expecting Lisa to arrive on the Earth, thwarting his original plans. In order to achieve randomness he had to confront it. She then started to consider how she could use this to her advantage. She had gained some randomness of her own, which he had unwittingly provided her with, when he had transferred some of the crystal's power to her via the two halves of the Earth's key.

Lisa said, 'I am not going to let you take the Earth's power. I now have the power of the crystals on my side. You can not defeat me, no matter what words you use, and you know this. Otherwise you will have defeated me by now, rather than just standing there making empty threats. You will leave this planet forever, and know that it is protected. You will never be permitted to obtain its power. You will have to live with the universe being what it is.'

The man was silent at this point, his face expressionless. The rest of Lisa's companions started to believe that they were going to win this fight, that there was nothing more that the man could do, that it now wasn't going to be possible for him to take the Earth's power.

He then reached out his other hand towards Lisa, and she reached out hers towards him. Everyone could see that they were exerting themselves to their very limits, and neither of them was able to overcome the other. They had reached a stalemate, meaning that things would have to stay the same, which suited Lisa far more than it suited the man.

The Dragon Keeper was watching all of this, and could see that the man, despite all of his power, wasn't going to be able to defeat Lisa. But she now didn't want him to defeat Lisa, as that would just lead to him trying to take advantage of herself. She now wanted him to be defeated,

but she could see that Lisa wasn't going to be able to do so by herself. She was going to need help.

The Dragon Keeper walked across the car park, and stood next to Lisa. This took everyone, without exception, by surprise. Lisa's companions felt that maybe the Dragon Keeper had decided to switch sides in a similar manner to what Welt had done. The Dragon Keeper looked at the man, and he looked back at her, and now there was a look of fear on his face. He said, 'Don't do this. You don't want to do this. Don't use the randomness for this! This is not how it is meant to be!'

The Dragon Keeper replied, 'Be quiet! You were always planning to use me, weren't you? You had no interest in my plans, in what it was that I wanted. I wanted to create, not destroy everything! What is the point of chaos without the people to experience it? Where is the perfection in that? No, I will not allow you to use me! It is I who will use you!' She then raised her hands towards him, and directed her own energy out.

Lisa wasn't sure what to do about this. She knew that with her strength combined with the Dragon Keeper's they would be able to defeat this man. But then the world still wouldn't be safe, as it was clear that the Dragon Keeper still intended to take the Earth's power for herself. Lisa then had another decision to make. Either defeat this man, eliminating one enemy, and then face a stronger Dragon Keeper, or to flee, now, which would mean that the Dragon Keeper would be defeated by the man in some manner, but then Lisa wouldn't know what the man would do next.

Lisa felt that she would be better able to deal with the Dragon Keeper in the future, and so she focussed on defeating the man, directing all her efforts towards him.

'No!' he cried out, as Lisa and the Dragon Keeper got closer towards him. 'No! How can this be...!!!' Lisa's and the Dragon Keeper's strength was then able to get through, and make contact with him, forcing him to his knees. He then started to glow brightly, before disappearing into a blaze of light.

What happened next happened incredibly quickly. The Dragon Keeper walked straight forward, and started to absorb the man's power that was starting to dissipate. She simultaneously directed one of her arms towards Lisa, to stop her from coming anywhere near this power.

Lisa saw this, and knew that she wouldn't be able to deal with the Dragon Keeper on her own once she had absorbed the man's power. She had Steve and Natasha with her, and she had to think about them. Once the Dragon Keeper was at full strength there would be nothing to stop her from taking their essences and then forming the key to the Earth's power. She had to get them out of there.

Lisa shouted towards them, 'Everyone, around me!' They did as she said. The crystals started to glow again, and Lisa didn't know what this meant, but she didn't have time to find out. She used her powers to teleport them all out of there. She took them to the nearest safe place that she could think of, Natasha's flat.

What she didn't realise was that the crystals had also taken them forward in time, by a full day.

Yes, dear reader, there has been a great turn of events today. The man has finally been defeated. But I fear that it may be at too great a cost...