

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:

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DAY TWENTY-TWO

LISA'S CHOICE

He searched the universe of her mind far and wide. Everywhere he went he saw traces of her. She was in every star and in every planet. She was in every asteroid and every comet. On the populated worlds she was in every blade of grass and in every tree, great and small. She was in all of the living creatures of this world, from the smallest micro organisms to the greatest beasts.

He looked at all of the intelligent beings of this universe, and he could see her in each of them as well. In everything that they did and in everything that they said, he could see traces of her.

Eventually, his search started to close in on the world where she was currently staying. He could feel that he was getting ever closer to her. He sped on in anticipation...

The Apocolynium – XXII

On the twenty-second day all of those who were at Steve's flat awoke early. There was quite a queue for the bathroom. Prion, Sarna, Parto, Gramshaw, and Welt were all amazed at the shower, and were keen to take their turns in it. They had never known of such an easy way to get themselves clean. They all wanted to stay in the shower for longer, but were all reminded that there was only a limited amount of hot water for all of them.

Once everyone had washed, and those that needed and wanted to had eaten, they all prepared to set out for Naomi's house. Welt had suggested that Lisa simply teleport them there, but she advised that this may not be such a good idea – she said that she needed to try and conserve her strength in case they encountered the man again. In truth, however, she was simply trying to put off doing what it was she felt that she needed to do.

And so they left Steve's flat on foot. They went to Belmont Circle, where they then boarded a bus that took them to Canons Park Station. (Lisa ensured that those who didn't have the necessary powers were able to board the bus with the need for buying a ticket.) Once at Canons Park Station they boarded a southbound Jubilee Line train and headed towards Kilburn.

Since she had parted company with Lisa, Naomi had mainly been relaxing in what had been her home whilst she had been on the Earth. She had managed to put off going back to her earthly job for a while, but she knew that she was probably going to have to go back there at some point this week if she wanted to keep her job. But, in truth, going back to that job was not at the forefront of her mind. She was more concerned about the words that had been directed at her, 'Destiny Will Fall.' She knew all too well what that meant, and it scared her. It scared her a lot.

When she woke up on the twenty-second day she had a bad feeling. She felt that something terrible was going to happen to her that day.

Meanwhile, in Queensbury, the man and the Dragon Keeper were also preparing to leave the house that they had been staying in. They needed to go and find Ian. Using his powers the man was able to detect that he was still in Elephant and Castle. But, rather than teleport there, he too decided to use public transport. In his case it was true that he needed to conserve his strength. But he was hoping that, once he was done with Ian, he wouldn't need to worry about conserving his strength any further.

Once they were ready they made their way to Queensbury station, and they too boarded a southbound Jubilee Line train, although not the same one that Lisa and her companions were on – they had passed through Queensbury some time before. The man and the Dragon Keeper headed towards Baker Street, where they changed to a southbound Bakerloo Line train towards Elephant and Castle.

Lisa and her companions got quite a few strange looks whilst they were on the train, but, fortunately, no one bothered them. On this occasion she was glad that the people of London rarely spoke to their fellow passengers whilst on public transport.

They all got off at Kilburn and made their way towards Naomi's house. Lisa was dreading every step that she took. She didn't want to have to do what it was that she was planning to do. She wanted to put it off for as long as she could. But she knew that every step she took was taking her closer to Naomi, and the task that she felt she had to do.

It didn't take them long to reach Naomi's house. Whilst Lisa was perfectly capable of opening the door by herself, she still chose to ring the doorbell.

Naomi looked up when she heard the doorbell. She suspected that it may have been Lisa who had come to see her, but she still stalled in getting up to go and answer the door. Her feeling of dread was heightened. She felt that whatever bad thing that was going to happen that day was going to happen very shortly.

Eventually she knew that she couldn't stall any longer, and so she finally got up and answered the door. As she had suspected, she saw Lisa standing there. But she was surprised to see all of the others there as well.

'Hi,' said Lisa. Naomi could detect the sadness that Lisa felt by looking at her face.

'Hi...' she replied.

Lisa then stepped forward and hugged Naomi, and Naomi returned the hug. She knew that whatever was going to happen was about to happen.

They broke off the hug and then Lisa said, ‘Can we come in?’

‘Sure...’

They all went inside, where they assembled in Naomi’s living room. Everyone was looking at Naomi. She didn’t like the feeling of having all of their eyes on her.

There then followed an uncomfortable silence. Eventually, it was Parto who broke it by saying, ‘So, what is it that we need to do here?’

They all turned to face Lisa, who took a deep breath. She knew that they weren’t going to like what it was that she had to say. But she also knew that she couldn’t put off saying it any longer.

She said, ‘Naomi, the Dragon Keeper has summoned a man to the Earth, a man who has incredible power. He was able to overcome me and had me tied up and powerless in a basement. I was lucky to be able to escape. I think it’s quite clear that this man is trying to obtain the Earth’s power for his own purposes. It is likely that he will try and come after Steve and Natasha again. We can’t allow him to do that. We have to try and find a way to stop him. In order to do that we need to find a way to increase our own strength, so that when we next face him we stand a chance of defeating him.’

She then turned to face the others and said, ‘As you may have gathered, people such as myself have their own power. It’s very rare for any of us to...’ She took a deep breath before she continued. ‘It’s very rare for any of us to die, but, when we do, the power that we have dissipates into the surrounding area. If any one of us in that area then they can absorb this power and use it for themselves.’

At this point she felt that some of them would probably have been able to work out why she had brought them here. If they hadn’t, they certainly would after she said the next things that she had to say. She said, ‘Naomi has... some power of her own. If she were to... then we could... I could absorb that power myself...’

There was a stunned silence in the room, and then Gramshaw said, ‘Lisa, please don’t tell me that you’re saying what it is I think you’re saying. We couldn’t possibly do that...’

‘Couldn’t we?’ asked Welt. ‘You heard what Lisa said. You know what that man is capable of. If we don’t find a way to build up our own power then we have as good as lost this fight. If this is what it takes to do so then so be it. It is better that only one of us is killed rather than all of us!’

Hearing this gave Naomi a shock. She already knew what it was that Lisa had meant before Welt had spoken, but actually hearing the word ‘killed’ used in relation to her made her jump. It made it feel real. It made her realise that she might actually be coming to the end of her very long

life. A life that she didn't want to lose.

Sarna then said, 'We can't kill Naomi! We just can't! I don't care, but we have to find another way. We have to find another source of power!'

Welt then said, 'But what if there is no other source? What if this is our only hope? There's no point in our sparing her life, only for all of us to just be killed anyway.'

'But we still can't do it. It's barbaric!'

Lisa then said, 'Do you think I *want* to do this? If there was another way don't you think I would take it?' Tears were starting to well up in her eyes. 'I can't face that man with the strength that I have. It just isn't enough. I need more. If there was another way then I would gladly take it, but I'm afraid that there just isn't. This is the only choice that I have.' Tears started to roll down her cheek.

There was another uncomfortable silence. This time it was Naomi who broke it, by quietly saying, 'Can I say something?' Everyone turned to look at her. She continued with, 'I don't want to have to die. But I hear what you are saying. That if I don't die then the Earth, this world, is doomed. I wouldn't want to stop you from doing this, and then bear witness to the destruction of the Earth, and the consequences that that would have for the rest of the cosmos. I wouldn't be able to live with myself if that were to happen. And so, Lisa, I give up my life freely to you. Take my power, and face this man that would mean this world harm.'

Sarna then said, 'Naomi, no, you don't have to do this. We'll find another way. There has to be another way.'

'It's OK.' Naomi was surprised to find herself smiling, even though there were now tears welling up in her own eyes. 'If it's for the good of the Earth and the cosmos, then I'm glad to lay down my life. It would mean that my death wouldn't be pointless. It would mean something. It would save... everyone.'

Silence filled the room once more. Eventually Lisa said, 'Is there anything you want to do before I...'

Naomi thought for a moment. There were plenty of things that she would have liked to do. But she didn't feel that she could enjoy doing any of them, knowing that soon her life would be over. And so she just said, 'No, let's do this now. Let's not draw it out for any longer than we have to.'

Lisa nodded, and then said, 'Let's go to another room. The others don't need to witness it.'

'No,' said Naomi. 'Let them bear witness to it. After this is all over they will remember this moment, and live on to tell others about it. Don't ever let me be forgotten.' She then knelt down before Lisa and said, 'Please, make it quick.'

Lisa stood before Naomi, knowing that now the moment had arrived. The moment that she had been dreading. She closed her eyes and said, quietly, 'Please forgive me.' She then started to draw power into her hands. All she would have to do was place her hands on either side of Naomi's head, and then it would be done.

She held out her hands, and had them hovering to either side of Naomi's head. There were tears flowing down Naomi's cheeks. All Lisa needed to do was to move her hands a little closer together so that they came into contact with Naomi's head...

She started to move them, but she resisted moving them any further. She racked her brain again, trying to see if she could work out any other way that she could gain the power that she needed to defeat the man. But she couldn't think of anything. It had to be this. She had to place her hands on Naomi's head. She had to take away her life. She had to kill her.

But she found that she couldn't. She just couldn't make her hands move. She didn't want to kill Naomi. She couldn't kill her. She just couldn't take away the life of an innocent. She moved her hands away, fell to her knees, and said, 'I can't do it! I just can't do it...' She burst into tears.

Naomi looked up, and then she hugged Lisa. She felt terrible. She was both relieved that she hadn't been killed, and terrified at what the consequences of that might be.

At that point the crystals that were around the necks of Prion, Sarna, Parto, and Gramshaw, started to glow. Everyone turned to look of them. They then heard a voice, or rather, four voices that emanated from the crystals and spoke in unison. They said, 'Lisa, Naomi. You have reached a juncture. Naomi, you chose to give up your life freely. Lisa, despite knowing the consequences, you have chosen not to take the life of an innocent. You have proven the goodness that is within your heart. We know that you love this planet and this universe. We will now help you to defend it. We freely give you our power. Arise, and receive it.'

Lisa stood up and faced the crystals. Beams of energy started to flow out of the crystals and into her. As they did so she felt her strength increase. And she was overcome with joy.

Mr Ian Woon looked up as soon as the man and the Dragon Keeper entered the cafe. He looked at the man and said, 'I was wondering how long it would be before you showed up.'

'Be quiet, old man. You know what it is that I have come for, and don't try denying it.'

'Oh yes, I am quite aware of why it is you are here. But, before you do what you have come here for, hear me out. The path of events is not always clear. You may think you know what is going to happen, that everything has been predetermined. But there are random elements at work. Random elements that are changing things. You need to be careful. You think you are safe, that nothing more is going to stop you. But you might want to think about what it is that

you are doing. You might want to be alert to all that is going on around you. For you will see that there are things that are *different*.'

"That's enough!" said the man. "I will not waste any more time. Now, prepare yourself, father! Your power will now be mine, and I will use it to gain the power of this world. The time for watching is over. Now is the time for us to take action!"

The man walked up to Ian, and placed his hands on either side of his head. Ian cried out in pain. He was just about able to utter the words, 'All... is not... as it seems...' He then died.

The man wasted no time in absorbing the power that was now dissipating from Ian...