

# Gate Five

by Abigail Ferreira

The glass in his hands shook slightly, while the images from the box flashed in his eyes. He seldom ever watched for news, it always upset him after. This time was different though. He left on the verge of an emotional breakdown. His chest heaved, and his mind raced to dark places. He felt the panic swell in his stomach and start to boil over. Tears swam in his brown eyes; he blinked to keep them back. His eyes flickered to the horse shoe over the door, and the pile of salt on the floor, and finally to the plane ticket on the table.

He had never left the country, or even the state, but now he had to. The Malaysian plane had disappeared. Poof, gone. Never to be heard from again. His fear has plagued him for so long, he thought he ought to do something about it. This trip is the perfect excuse to get started. He'd been practicing, starting with opening his door and taking one step out, this lasted about a week. He gradually built it up till he walked to the grocery store for the first time in ten years.

He put his glass down, stood up, and grabbed his plane ticket, looking at it. When his condition has started to take its toll, he was lucky enough to find a stay at home job, where he could work on the computer for a business that was located in Germany. He usually took business meeting through Skype, but this time he told the company that he could fly to the meeting instead. He had made a promise, but that was before the Malaysia flight disaster. Reluctantly, he put the ticket down, and proceeded to his room to pack his bags in preparation for the next day.

The day of the flight, he called a taxi, arrived at the airport, and flew through security. He had very little luggage. As he walked to his gate, he began to feel the panic swell up in him, starting in his chest. The tingling sensation traveled throughout his body, and he felt his throat close up. His pace slowed, people behind him pushed past in agitation. As he rounded the corner, he saw his gate. 'Gate 5' it read in big black letters. The gate number seemed to punch him in the face. Five, of all the unlucky numbers, it was five. The panic began to spread faster, his eyes bulged, and his face turned red.

He quickly turned around and proceeded to walk away. His pace quickened until he was in full sprint, through the airport, out the glass sliding doors. He didn't think to call a taxi, all he wanted was to get away. He ran to his apartment, and as he climbed up the steps, he felt his heart burst. He had ran himself into a heart attack. He clutched at his chest, and slid down the front steps.

His eyes opened, and he found himself still at the airport, for the whole thing had just been in his mind. His hand was at his heart and his eyes were resting on the five. He swallowed hard, and tried to slow down his breathing. Taking small steps forward, he reached 'Gate 5', and handed over his ticket. Boarding the plane he glanced over his ticket for his seat number and drew a double take. 'Seat number: 13'. Thirteen, an even more unlucky number than five. He stopped walking, till someone behind him yelled for him to move. As he reached his seat, he

stared at it, his eyes widened, his breath caught in his throat. A squeak of fear escaped his lips, he became paralyzed from fear his legs turned to stone.

He was eventually forced to sit down by the flight attendant. But he held on to the arms of the chairs making his butt hover over the seat, for fear of touching it would bring a plague. When the aircraft took off, he closed his eyes. He kept them closed for some time, till he heard the captain's voice come on over the intercom. The captain talked about the weather conditions and how the flight was going to go smoothly. At this he knocked on the arm of his chair, but looking down he saw it was plastic, not wood. Knocking on plastic would not help him; it would not protect him from a dreadful fate. The captain stopped talking but still remained on air. The next thing he heard the captain say was "Uh-oh".