

“FIRE”

Part 1



<https://youtu.be/so99VRoFeW0>

(Song by: SHINee)

I sink myself in a sea of people with different individualities

Present yet not existing, struggling every day

(Lyrics Sung By: SHINee)



11:45 A.M. – FLIGHT ARRIVAL - LAX

THEY had finally landed. Standing patiently, SooMin waited for Henry to get his suitcase from the overhead bin. Dropping it down in front of him, he flipped up the handle nodding for her to follow as he stepped into the slow-moving line. Since they were both headed in the same direction, it only made sense she would tag along.

Hitting the open lobby area, LAX with its sweet intoxicating aroma of plants and flowers smelled deliciously different than S. Korea’s Incheon Airport. Taking long strides Henry unconsciously broke away from the claustrophobic crowd, leaving SooMin struggling to keep up.

“Hey what’s the hurry? We’re both going to baggage, I doubt your rides going anywhere,” she barked, scurrying along behind him, already flushed from the warmth of her heavy sweatshirt.

Not easing up, he smiled inwardly calling over his shoulder, “No hurry, I just walk fast.”

Still attempting to keep up the pace, she bounded alongside him then dropped back, alone. At this rate there was no way to carry on a conversation. The cozy, familiar feeling of their final moments in the air had already been reduced to nothingness. Giving up, she stopped in the middle of the hallway mumbling under her breath, “Just go on without me then.”

Realizing she wasn't behind him, Henry swung around. There she stood, with scores of people inadvertently ignoring her as they whisked by. *Why did she insist on yanking his chain like this, making him feel like a jerk?* "Go on," she encouraged shooing him forward, "I said it's okay."

"No, no . . . I'll slow down . . . but, damn! Only half a block in and you're already holding up the troops." Teasing mercilessly, he couldn't pass up the opportunity to watch her squirm just a few more minutes. "You can't possibly be a dancer, or you'd be able to keep up. Doubt you'd make it through five minutes of one of my rehearsals."

Revitalized by anger, SooMin stood tall staring into his dark, mocking eyes. *She wanted to like him, but why did he make her feel so inadequate at some level? And, how dare he bring her questionable dancing ability into it. She didn't need dance . . . she had piano. SO THERE, HENRY LAU.*

"Stop making assumptions you know nothing about. I might be a FABULOUS dancer," she quipped, scrunching her nose at his tapping foot. Pointing toward the Ladies' Room across the crowded hallway she added, "go or not, your choice, 'cause right now I'M headed THAT way. Besides, despite what you think, I AM a big girl. I can follow the crowd to Baggage without you."

Standing back on his heels, Henry rested one hand lightly atop the suitcase handle. *His ride was waiting, and now she had to pee. Typical woman.*

"DEAR GOD. I'll wait," he groaned under his breath, stepping off to one side.

But, for some reason, that wasn't good enough for the usually compliant SooMin. She wasn't stupid. It was written all over his smug, disinterested face that he didn't want to comply.

"I know what your problem is . . . God forbid, I would hold up the famous 'Super Junior-M' Idol Henry Lau. Too many fangirls on your tail? You need me to stay back and run interference?" Shrugging her shoulders, a blank expression masked the innate excitement she'd felt stepping off the plane behind him. "OH WAITTTT . . . isn't that funny, I don't think I've seen even one sniffing around you for an autograph . . ."

"Whoahhh . . ." Surprised at her sarcastic tone, Henry tipped his ball cap up over his forehead. *You did NOT just pull the fangirl card on me? Pride hurt 'Little Girl'? 'Cause obviously you're saying one thing and meaning something entirely different. Along with incessant peeing, that's what girls do!*

Standing his ground, he made a split-second decision that a gentleman would wait and walk with her, not make her brave the strange airport alone. He wasn't an insensitive heathen.

"You're right. I said I'll wait . . . Go," he urged her quietly, "whoever's picking you up would want to know you had help, your first time flying Commercial and all."

Stopping short of his muscular, yet lanky frame SooMin smiled, bowing quickly in appreciation, thanking him in her native Korean, "Gamsahabnida Henry Lau SSI, (FORMAL TERM FOR FRIEND)" before flipping away and dashing into the restroom.

Maybe there was hope for him yet. Even though he lacked manners and was somewhat bipolar, Idol Asshole was a perfect description. It was definitely time for Keis Wu to take over! SHE wasn't afraid to exert her inner bitch and call him out on his attitude.

FATE AND TIME

WHISKING in and out of passengers in the crowded airport, tiny Fate sensed something was about to happen. "Hurry, hurry, hurry . . ." Muttering to herself she sailed unseen down the escalator, directly over the heads of SooMin and Henry. *Why she had ever been worried about Henry she didn't know. Clearly, the two of them were barely even conversing.*

"Pssst, Time, where are you?"

Taken aback at the plump figure of Father Time already sitting cross-legged in the middle of the revolving luggage conveyer, (guitar slung over one shoulder), she plopped exhausted atop a large black suitcase. *At least someone was relaxed enough to enjoy the commotion of the surrounding crowd.*

Smiling into the myriad of faces passing before him, Father Time wished he was a flesh and blood man. It would have been so much fun to see the reactions of the gathering passengers as he twirled by, nestled amongst their suitcases. Invisibility had its pitfalls.

"What now Fate? I thought things were under control here." Confusion setting in, he wondered why she was so distraught. They had just dodged a bullet in the air, and he'd already been off tending to other issues.

“We’re not out of the woods yet. I can feel it. You’re still on-call don’t forget.” Eyes wide with worry, she twisted a long red piece of yarn hair craning her neck in an attempt to gauge the situation before it was too late. “I can’t explain. But, my hair hurts, and I sense there’s about to be a cosmic eruption of some sort.

“Tsk, tsk, tsk. Relax little one . . .” Waving one hand in the air nonchalantly, Time chuckled at her persistent knack for the dramatic. Even though a trained expert, she was still a youngster, prone to over-sensitivity.

“Look around at how happy everyone is. Our sisters are about to meet again, MinSeok is meeting Henry for the first time and down the corridor there, Key and Minho are preparing to get their luggage. I think you’re over-reacting. Maybe our ascent into the air off the jet wing has messed with your equilibrium. You said yourself you don’t like to fly. And . . . you DID just fly down the escalator.”

Rising to leave, he hugged the small girl when a sudden heaviness in the atmosphere forced him down on one knee, the time guitar nearly smacking him in the chin.

Ignoring their surroundings in the bustling airport, Fate grabbed him by the arm hissing breathlessly in his ear, “SEE, I told you. NOW do you believe me?”

“I uhhh, I don’t know.” Bushy eyebrows creased in concern, he ran one plump finger down the sleek stem of his instrument. “I can’t say I’ve had anything quite like this take place before. Have you?”

“Of course not. Why do you think I called you here? It’s because I DON’T see anything unusual going on.”

As a matter of fact, everything seemed to be quite normal. Couples in her line of vision happy, laughing, the Red String of the ones fated to be together, visible and connected, friends reuniting. Something was throwing off the heavens. Shaking nervously, she knew whatever was happening, this was not going as planned.

“Is it Henry Lau you’re worried about?” Father Time’s question was cautiously quiet, as he lifted Fate off the large suitcase, right before a tall, burly gentleman snatched it out from under

her. He was acutely aware, Henry had presented himself like a thorn in her side before ever leaving the airport in Korea.

“Nooo. This is EVIL . . . Pure evil.” Focused on the four most important people in their line of vision, Fate cringed, clinging to him, as the belt continued around. “I’ve never experienced something this intense before. This is NOT my specialty. I’m in charge of soul mates. Nothing else. My mandate is only to see they connect with the RIGHT soul. Whatever’s causing this could end up blowing us all to pieces.” *Then, who would take the blame for that?*

Wringing her hands despairingly all she could envision were the hundreds of Red Strings strewn across the airport in front of her, mangled and torn for eternity, with herself at the helm. *No tears, no tears . . . this isn’t my fault. I’m a joyful person. I live in the world of love and happiness.*

BAGGAGE CLAIM

LEERING wickedly, SungWoo, pointed one knobby finger toward the airport escalator, thinking, ‘*There’s my Princess’ now*, as SooMin (Henry at her heels) rushed on, hiking her large purse closer to one side. Elbowing the man beside him roughly, his voice bordered on disgust.

“She looks too fucking happy.”



Reeling from the jolt, Andy retaliated, asking gruffly, “Why the hell do you care? And, why are we hiding out right here? Where’s the ‘Contact’ we’re supposed to meet up with?”

Cracking his knuckles, SungWoo smirked, attempting to put the outspoken Andy in his place. “There. Maybe I should wander over and say hello . . .”

“What the hell. You dragged me all the way here for this? To stoke your disgusting obsession? Don’t you have something more important to do? Come to think of it . . . does Jang even know you’re still in town?”

“Shut up! I do what I fucking want. He doesn’t run my life.” Leaning back into the wall, SungWoo rubbed his neck in irritation at the continued disrespect that this peon next to him constantly harbored for his authority.

“Whatever . . . I’m leaving. You seem to have this under control.” Rolling his eyes, Andy dismissed the younger man’s usual crass comments like he would a disobedient teenager. “Pay for my own damned cab, got work to do,” he mumbled, aware that every summer since he’d been on Jang’s payroll, SungWoo had become increasingly more aggressive, and psychotic. There had to be a way to stop him, before he hurt someone.

One arm out to stop him, SungWoo sniffed impatiently, “Just stay put asshole . . . are you blind? You can’t see the body guards hovering around the sickening little family?” Still anticipating the moment, he stuck his neck out, eyes still on SooMin headed for HyeSu’s awaiting arms.

‘The Princess’ and the ‘Bitch’ . . . reunited again, playing out right before him. In the past it would’ve been his worst nightmare, accompanied by cold sweats and sleepless nights. But, THIS time he was already one step ahead of the game. He had the bitch, right where he wanted her.

Not taking the bait, Andy jerked away, touching his earpiece. “You’re on your own, Jang’s calling. I’m getting the hell out before somebody recognizes me.”



“OH MY, OH MY . . . LOOK. It’s SungWoo. Why wasn’t I warned? Time, you must stop him, he can’t be seen. I can’t let the Red Strings cross or break. Hurry!” The panicked little Fate rushed to come up with a quick solution.

If the evil, soul-less SungWoo interfered with the (already off-kilter) Fates, by coming in contact with the blue-eyed sisters directly in sight of Key and Minho, it could accidentally cause the perfect storm. And, POOF! They would all be gone.

Arms flying, mumbling every chant, mantra and prayer she could think of, Fate flung up off the conveyer, yarn hair bouncing as she scrambled over the tattooed arms of Father Time. *I’m magical. It should only take a nod, a word, or a thought to stop him. Why isn’t it working?*

Sensing the danger, Time stepped in, strumming the proper chords, giving her the window she needed. But, looking around, even he couldn’t understand why people were still moving and conversing, not freezing in their steps . . . He’d never been rendered helpless like this before.

Watching in horror as she raced at SungWoo, (unaware she was powerless to prevent the inevitable) he dropped over his time-guitar, mumbling a small prayer himself to protect it from the fallout of what was about to commence.

Throwing herself between the 'devil himself' and the sisters, little Fate hoped to at least keep the evil from tangling or breaking the fated strings.



STEPPING off the escalator, Keis had watched IlSeok bouncing up and down on Daddy Wu's arm all the way from the top floor. Henry was still close behind, having gotten on a few steps back, struggling to get his suitcase on beside him in the crowd. Knowing he was there, still her excitement got the better of her. Bounding off the bottom step she ran full speed ahead toward the people she loved most in the world!

Gliding down to the floor behind her, Henry watched amused as she leapt into the arms of a deliciously sexy young woman, standing beside a middle-aged Asian man. *Were they related? Sister's maybe? Or just good friends? Keis hadn't mentioned having a sister.*

She was MORE than enticing. Clapsed in a tight embrace they danced around together, looking much like 'Cinderella' and the ugly 'Step-sister'. Her dark hair (pulled back in a sleek pony tail) swayed back and forth as she bounced, tan, sun-kissed legs, visible in tight jean shorts, flexing with each move. His burning eyes swept all the way from her small ankles up to the round curve of her deliciously squeezable bottom. *Was it possible to get an introduction before he left 'Little Keis' for good?*

And, then he saw it. Lo and behold, the sign perched against the wall beside them, had his name on it. What an amazing stroke of luck! Apparently, the man standing off to one side, was Mr. Yook. *Did that mean, he and Keis were about to be roommates? Quite possibly the beauty in her arms as well . . . Holy shit!*

