

She Wore Red Trainers

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To all those who are striving to
'keep it halal'

1

She was still looking at me, I could feel it.

You know how it feels when someone is staring at the back of your neck; it's as if they're sending off radio waves or something. Of course, she was expecting me to turn around and look at her again. I caught the look she gave me, just before I sat down by the window on the bus. I knew what it meant.

I took out my phone and started to play a game, hunching my shoulders to show that I was *not interested*.

A year earlier, when I had started praying regularly and paying attention to halal and haram at last, Dad had reminded me of the Islamic guidelines on girls, now that I was finally ready to hear them: no second look, limited interaction, definitely no dating and, of course, no physical contact of any kind before marriage.

There's no point pretending it wasn't hard.

Some days, I thought I would literally go crazy, I was so tense and wound up. And all the girls in their summer dresses didn't help things, trust me. Plus I was still thinking about my ex-girlfriend, Amy.

'Fast, son,' was Dad's advice. 'Work out, play basketball or something. It will give you an outlet.'