

OUT ON THE STREETS

Our streets aren't safe for women. Every day, millions of women go about their day with fear in the back of their minds. While society strives to change this, it's important for those without perspective to understand the dangers women face every step of the way. For this week's Fable Factory, four of our writers at SHOUT share their experiences of being made to feel unsafe out on the streets.

HIYA ISLAM

Every time she steps out, she takes two things with her – the pepper spray and a sense of insecurity. She tries to blend in with the crowd, sticking to the pack rather than being the lone wolf. Lone wolves are likely to make it to sorry headlines. And so, her safety comes at the price of personal space. Lusty eyes, cat calls and unwelcome touches accompany her home. Every day. Every night. She dreams of safe streets in her sleep. But then she wakes up.

ALIZA RAHMAN

The day was sunny and Anika decided to eat at a place outside the campus. Exams were over, and she was in a celebratory mood. As she walked on the part of the street sectioned off by a rope to separate pedestrians from the continuous stream of cars passing by, she found her way blocked by a man standing smack in the middle, giving her a suggestive look. She asked him to move; he didn't. Exhausted and sensing danger, she went back. The mood had changed.

SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

Just three more roads, and then I'll be in a place public enough. I quickened my pace, and so did the man following me. He seemed to be mirroring my movements. I pulled my *orna* up to my head and covered my face. I wanted to be invisible. There were now three of them. I couldn't walk any faster and they seemed to be catching on. Suddenly, a bright light shone behind me as I crossed the last street and I realised a car had taken a turn, right before they could cross the street. *Safe, but for how long?*

