



# Grandpa in WW-II

by Zinnia Ahmad

FOR years I've been hearing about my late grandfather's service in World War II. How he got drafted, where he was taken a prisoner, when he returned — they were the same stories told over and over by my mother and my aunts. But facts and figures about the war was not what I was really interested in. There was something else I was very keen on knowing: feelings — my grandmother's feelings when my grandfather was at war. I wanted to hear the story from her own lips. For a long time I had been meaning to ask her about the war. But there always seemed to be inevitable problems — interruptions. Wrong time or place. Finally that day I got my opportunity.

It was a quiet evening. Grandma and I were alone in the veranda. My parents were away in Chittagong attending the annual SAFA conference while my mischievous brother was outside taking advantage of this freedom. "Grandma, tell me about your life," I tried to beat around the bush.

"Which one?" she asked. "What do you mean, which one? Do I have to remind you that so far you had only one life."

"One — yes. But these 70 years of life can be divided into 3 distinct parts. One is the unmarried carefree life of a girl during the British rule. Another the married, alert life of a woman during the Pakistani rule and now the widowed life of a patient of rheumatism and diabetes in an independent country.

Tell me about those 5 years when Grandpa was at war, and you spent your days waiting and hoping."

"Oh, no. That's too personal! Please, Grandma, I'd love to know how you felt during those lonely 5 years."

It took a lot more coaxing, pleading and flattering until I finally succeeded in removing the ruts and potholes from her memory lane.

I was married to your grandpa," she began, at the age of 13. But, as the customs were in those days, it was another 4

years before I was brought into my in-laws house. I lived only 6 months with your Grandpa and then he got drafted. He tried to avoid the orders, but being a well-known doctor in our district he had to obey them. He did not even know where he

in Singapore. This was the last we heard from him for a very long time. My parents nearly lost hope of ever seeing their only son-in-law again. They even used some superstitious methods to predict whether he was alive or dead. Fortunately,

saying that Dr. Siddique Ullah Chowdhury, your Grandpa, was alive but very sick at a hospital (I forgot the name) in Calcutta. At that time, his sister was leaving in Calcutta. She was informed about your Grandpa. She went to visit him and then wrote letters to us describing his condition.

After initial check-up in Calcutta he was taken to Darjeeling. When they got drafted, the army authorities had promised to restore everybody to their original weight after the war. So, he was taken there to recuperate.

"At last, came the homecoming day. I shall never forget the cheers, the flowers, the happy faces or the voice of my four-and-a-half-year-old daughter saying, 'Are you really my father? But I won't call you daddy unless you give me those chocolates in your bag.'"

She drifted back to the 'happiest day of her life. A cloud of nostalgia entered her eyes as she went on to describe everything in minute details. I wondered how she had kept these memories a secret for so long.

"I shall never forget that night either," she added with a shy smile. My curiosity got the better of me. "Why? I dared to ask."

"Because we did not talk to each other the whole night."

"Why?" again.

"Both of us misunderstood each other. I expected him to talk first. After all, those 5 years were not easy to live through, with people saying all sorts of things. On the other hand, I later got to know, he expected me to talk first. According to him, any minute of the 5 years could have meant death. And, he was right, too."

"But I ended our silent fight the next day, by giving him a ring," she said with another shy smile while I commented, "That's sweet."

"And then?" I wanted to hear more.

"Then?" she asked me back, well, then the king and queen lived happily together for a long, long time with six cute children.



would be going. He was told to report at the capital where he would be given detailed instructions. Amidst tears and solemn faces, your Grandpa bid farewell to my parents, his parents, other elders, cousins, friends and me at that time 6 months pregnant.

"Of course, Bangladesh was in no way affected by the war except that many high officials were drafted. We were keeping track of detailed informations about the war. There was the usual tense atmosphere whenever any unfavourable news was heard. As the months and years rolled by anxiety and fear for those at war increased. Finally, the climax for us came when we heard that your grandfather was taken as a prisoner

the results said alive.

"Despite any sort of superstitions, I was always adamant in my own belief that he was still alive. In one of his letters he had written, 'If you truly wait for me with all your mind and soul, I shall one day certainly come back to you. Keeping that in mind I never ceased to wait for him."

"Finally, the war ended. People started coming back home. But there was still no news of your Grandpa. It was then that fear, for the first time crept into my heart. Everyone got really worried. Being a widow at such an early age in those days meant 'a life messed up'. Then, one day we received a letter. Or rather, a note, which was written by a nurse,

LAST night I just could not sleep. One thing was very clear to me that this case was not just any other case. Was there a conspiracy going on behind this case? Well, there was always a chance of conspiracy, when you were top level officer who knows a lot of state secrets.

I just did not know when this case was going to come to an end. One thing I now knew was, a lot of people are going to die with this case. Maybe this case will remain unsolved, and I don't know why but for the last few days I was feeling very insecure, it felt like I might be killed in the next step. I looked at my watch. It was four thirty in the morning. We had to go to Akashpur, the place where Mr. Ferdous was murdered. Suddenly I heard someone knocking my door. So, I got up from the bed and found my bodyguard with a letter in his hand. "Who gave you this letter?" It has arrived from the DC office just now, sir. "I read very urgent" on the sealed envelope it to you quickly. "Thanks you". I opened the letter and there was only one paragraph and from line six to eight it was underlined with red ink which read "you must contact us the moment you get this letter and do not be late, because this letter and your phone call is very important for you and for us. It was signed by the director of CID. I looked at the letter for quite a long time and there folded it and kept it in the drawer. When I picked up the phone to dial to Dhaka to my greatest surprise I found that the phone was dead. Why was the phone dead? What was happening? Neela! where was Neela? I ran out of my room to her room and as expected she was not there. I called my sentry who said "Miss Neela has gone out for a walk." "Why did you let her go? Did you ask my permission? Who is going to be responsible of anything happens to her? Did you see a bodyguard with her." "I simply do not understand how could you do such a stupid thing." And by the way why is my phone dead? I need to make an urgent call to Dhaka, so fine the phone as soon as possible."

"Well, I will have to go after her, and in the mean time if she comes tell her to wait for me and for God sake do not let her go out this time. You do not know how important she is for this case." "Right, sir." "Sir, won't you take your bodyguard with you?" "No, I want to go

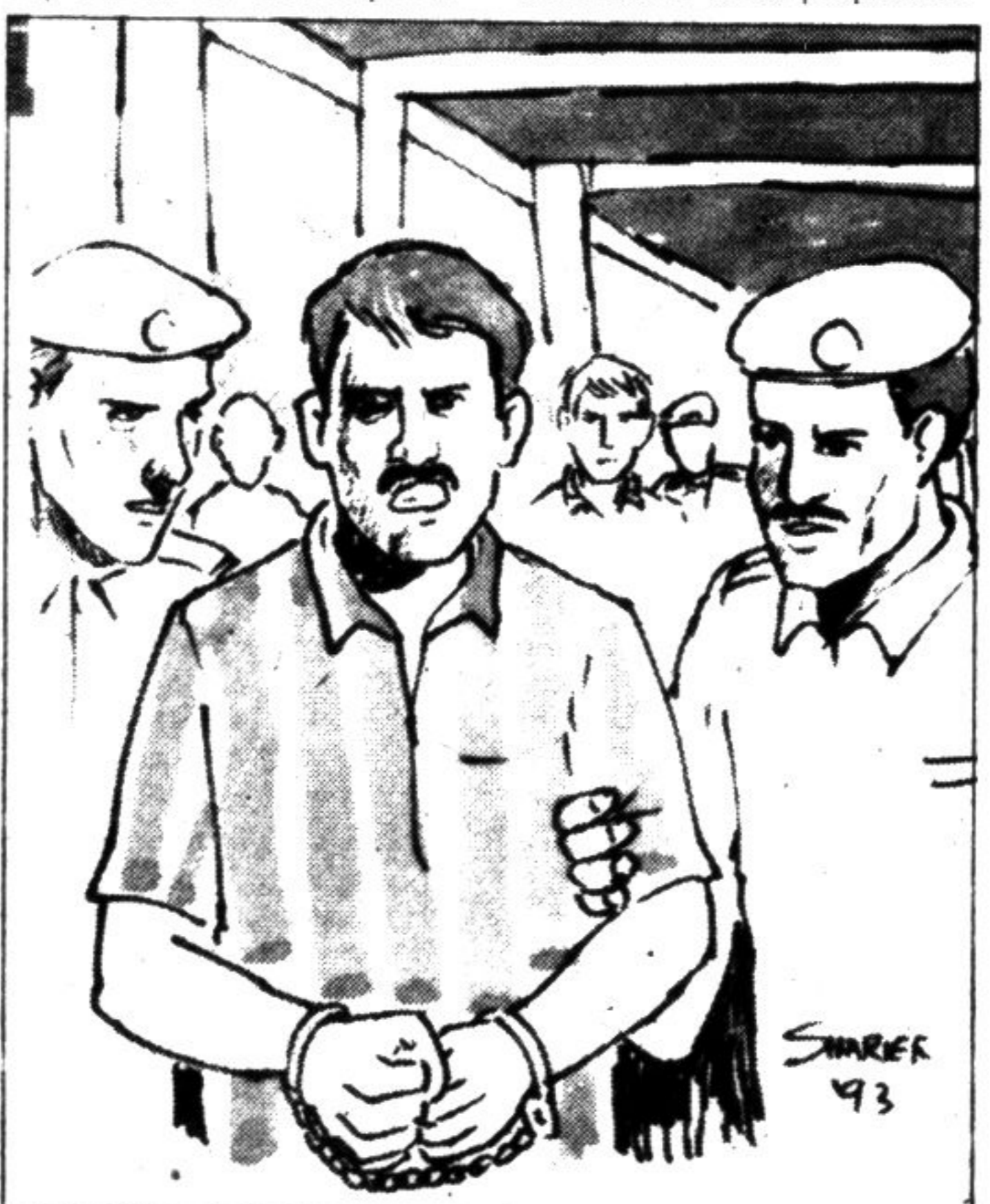
# MYSTERY

by Shahed Latif

alone." "But, sir ... just do as I say ok! I looked at my watch at it was fine forty five in the morning. I just could not understand why did the day start with such a hectic way?"

Where did Neela go? Where would I look for her now? This was a very known place for Neela and her family. What if something happened to her? What if Kashem (my sentry) had helped some one to kidnap her?

rest house after about six hours looking for her scared and quite unsure of her beauty. What if some one had murdered her? When I received the first letter it had no name and address it was written there that I would either get myself killed or Neela and so now I was really beginning to get scared. I hoped all these were false notions. When I came close to my rest house I could see a lot of people near



What if he was an agent of those who were trying to stop this case from proceeding. I felt sweat running down my back bone. When you look for something very important all sorts of weird things come to your mind. The same thing was happening to me also. I have had a lot of experience with CID but I don't know why I was so nervous with this case.

For nearly four hours now I had been looking for Neela in vain. One thing now came to my mind was that all the letters that had arrived so far Kashem was the one who bought it to me. Why? I started back for the

the gate and my heart began to beat very loudly. As I came with in twenty yards I saw two plain cloth policemen coming towards me, so I quickened my pace what is the matter? What has happened? The first words they said was "you are under arrest for the murder of Neela, Mr Ferdous's daughter." What? Neela has been murdered? Who murdered her? You will get your answer when you go to Dhaka." "You have to be handcuffed." "I just could not believe what I just heard. Neela murdered? Why?" "So, I was handcuffed and was brought to the rest house. Handcuff in my

hands I just could not believe my eyes. I was so thundered that I just could not talk. When I came to the rest house everyone was looking at me in a questioning eyes. I felt tears running down my cheeks. When I entered the drawing room I saw Neela's mother sitting there as soon as she saw me she serenaded "he killed my daughter, don't let him go." So I was taken away from that room. When I met my friend in the next room I saw tears in his eyes. "He said, why did this happen." "All I said to him was it is my fate."

The killing of Neela seemed to help those people who wanted to cover-up the murder of Mr. Ferdous. Fifteen years have gone by and I am still in jail. I have been blamed for this killing. Little has changed about this case and who murdered Mr. Ferdous or Neela, remains mystery to me?

My case that has been in the court for the last fifteen years is coming to an end. The Supreme Court's chief justice Mr. Barkatullah is going to give the verdict of my case on the 28th August this year. And I am quiet sure I am going to be hanged.

—The End

# FRIENDS & COMMITMENT

by Rifat Halim Laurel  
Friends are love for all. We love, we care. We share even if it is pain or joy.

Friends are hard to find, enemies are easy to make. One friend can last a lifetime even longer.

Friends even share secrets - only to keep it to themselves. World can break apart, wars may break out, sins might be committed — but friendship is there forever.

Friends might fall in love, which is even better, because it is friendship and love which ends into a commitment.



# Too Cute to be Human

# Dolls—a Little Girl's Best Friends

WHAT'S the difference between dolls and toys?

We asked this question to Tehzeeb Ahmed, 11. "Well, some dolls are toys, and most toys aren't dolls," she said.

Tricky one, that. But there are dolls in every house and everyone knows what they are.

They are cute, and well-dressed and they are too smooth-faced to be human. They are made of wood or plastic and most of them smile brightly at visitors.

Girls like to make friends with them and mothers like to keep them in show-cases, but what happens if you have over 200 of them?

Tehzeeb started collecting dolls when she was very young. She saw a dolls exhibition in Corning, USA, while visiting her aunts.

"I was thrilled to see so many dolls together and thought, why don't I start collecting them?"

She told her aunts about her plan. Her aunts instantly gave a few, to start with these dolls

ery Like stamps, each doll has the mark of the place where it is made.

"If you show me a doll, I can try and tell where it belongs, which country it comes from."

The styling of the dress, the face, the eye-brows, the hair and ornaments help the collector find out the "nationality" of the doll.

### Some research

It's not easy, and needs a little bit of research. The styling of the dress the face, the eye-brows, the hair and ornaments help the collector find out the "nationality" of the doll.

"I have a truly international collection," says Tehzeeb. "My grandparents travel a lot. First on their shopping list is always a doll of the country they visit."

### Lankan magic

The whole family is excited about doll collecting, says Tehzeeb's mother, Tina. "We are careful not to duplicate the dolls. We'll never buy two dolls which are alike."



were 20 years old, long-forgotten playmates of the aunts when they were girls.

From this beginning, the collection grew.

"Once people know you are collecting something, they give you more of these," says Tehzeeb.

Tehzeeb's mother, Tina, added to the collection. "Mom picks up dolls whenever she visits a fair or an exhibition."

Collecting dolls is a discov-

"Friends are also happy to add to the collection, so most of the dolls are gifts from interested people."

"Once a doll came from Bangladesh and Tehzeeb already had a doll like that. One of my friends came home that day with her Sri Lankan nanny. The nanny asked for the doll and returned it a few days later after dressing it as a beautiful Sri Lankan bride."

Dolls from East Europe are favourites of the family because

of the great mass of details in them.

"Red Indian dolls are cute, says Tehzeeb. They are a complete set with papoose (child) and jewellery."

"And we have dolls from most parts of India. You can tell them apart by the dress."

made, down to the gestures of the hands."

But the collection is not complete.

"We do not have enough from Africa and almost none from Australia and South America," says Tehzeeb.

"As you can see, there is a lot to observe in dolls. One



### Many details

"We have a specially interesting doll from Bangladesh. It shows the making of a 'kantha' or quilt. Then there's the snake charmer and his wife."

"Greek dolls are small but full of detail. In fact, one wishes to keep the dolls which are finely made."

What about dolls of the Gulf?

"They could do with some more details," says Tina, who is an artist. "People keep dolls as souvenirs and they have great value in promoting tourism."

Tehzeeb also likes the one which shows a Jordanian on a camel. "The latest is a Hawaiian. It shows a hula dancer in the dance pose."

"We also have three different types of Scottish dolls, all wearing different types of kilts."

"The biggest doll in our collection is that of a pathan from the borders of Afghanistan, wearing traditional jewellery."

"Dolls of brides and bridegrooms are special from the sub-continent. Thai dolls are very graceful, and so are the Ball dancing dolls," says Tina.

"For design, the prize goes to Japanese and Korean dolls," she says. "They are expertly

learns a lot about the customs and habits of people. My sister and I often play wedding scenes. We march the dolls and I pretend to be from the groom's side and she from the bride's side. We have a regular sing-song session. And of course, many 'foreign' guests attend the wedding!"

In Japan on March 3 of each year, families with daughters celebrate the "Hina Matsuri" or Doll Festival. This beautiful festival is a seasonal custom dating back some 1,000 years. On this day, each family sets out a number of dolls for display, placing a male-female pair of Hina dolls at the top of the display, as a sign of their prayer for the happiness of their young daughters.

The festival for boys that corresponds to the March 3 Hina Matsuri is called "Tango no Sukku", or simply Boys' Festival, and is held on May 5. Families with sons display splendid sets of miniature armor and figures of costumed warriors, and offer prayers that their sons will grow up strong and healthy.

Courtesy — Young Times

**YOU DON'T SAY!**

YOU'VE PROBABLY SAID THAT YOU WERE 'HUNGRY AS A BEAR' MANY TIMES. THERE ARE MANY EXPRESSIONS WITH ANIMALS IN THEM WHICH YOU HAVE USED TO DESCRIBE SOMEONE. HOW MANY OF THESE ANIMALS CAN YOU MATCH TO THE SAYINGS?

1. WISE AS AN
2. BLIND AS A
3. BUSY AS A
4. BRAVE AS A
5. MEMORY LIKE AN
6. STUBBORN AS A

# What Day Is It Today?

by Fardeen Chowdhury

What day is it today? I am no fool! For it is a Sunday. We have a test at school! Let it be not Monday Or Tuesday as well. For science is to be taught And something else I cannot tell.

I don't like Wednesday And hate Thursday too, Because of the lectures! So what else is new?

I feel very sick With fever and a cold. I'd rather stay in bed And do as the doctor told.

What do you say? 'Tis Friday? Well, I'll be blessed! Let me frolic in the park then! And on the grass rest.

# Jokes

Customer: Four bars of soap, please.  
Assistant: Do you want them scented?

Customer: No, I'll take them with me.

# Frustrations?

by Areba Panni

HAVE you ever wondered why the weirdest things keep on happening to you and only you?

For instance, your hair looks straight silky, and in one word 'perfect' just before going to bed at night; but you can never get it right when you want it. Or just before going to a party, pimples pop out on your face from nowhere. You can even visualize this! You're sitting in front of the television watching your favourite series and suddenly, your TV conks off. Okay, so you go over to your uncle's house nearby to watch the rest of the series, only to find your four year old cousin watching Walt Disney's sing-along songs and singing away in her squeakiest voice, and there's nothing you can do.

You go out somewhere in a rush and then to your utter dismay you notice that you are wearing your T-shirt inside out. You can't put the embarrassment in words, can you?

Talking about, younger brothers they are not like they used to be. You tell them to close the door, only to hear the reply, 'close it yourself!' Getting past 12 was difficult enough, I had to hear "Minor Kid" from my family at least 10 times a day. Now its, 'Wait till you're 18!' I mean, what is this! I will not hear these dumb excuses!

There are good sides to life too, without frustrations and complications, and these are just a few of life's, cruel jots (to me at least), so don't take them seriously. But I guess you'll end up feeling frustrated anyway!

# Shattered Dreams

by Tarannum Laila

MY home was in Missouri. Our house used to stand on the York Road. We had a lovely home. We were happy but then we never knew what the future held for us.

One night in summer, I woke up feeling somewhat cold. I rushed to the window to see whether it was open or not. It was closed and through the window I saw the water coming up the porch. I panicked because I was the only person awake and from the looks of the weather I knew the water was rising. Next, I thought I should wake my mum and dad and that's what I did. I told my dad to get his and mum's life jackets and to get on the small raft which we used on excursions down the river. I was scared and was walking nervously around the room anxiously waiting for their return from the garage with the raft.

By that time the water had risen high and was quickly creeping up to our bedrooms on the first floor. I saw mum and dad on the raft. They were trying to reach me, but as I tried to get on the raft the waves became fierce and I was nearly drowned. I screamed, and told my parents not to wait for me. I had no choice, so I clung tightly to the branches of the Pine tree near my bedroom.

The currents were getting stronger and it was very hard for me to hang on. I thought I wouldn't survive. I thought I would be dead and the water would be my grave. I felt morning would never come; but I was wrong, morning did come and

so did help. My parents had got rescue for me. They had gone to the life guard station and had told them to rescue me. Two life-guards came and hauled me out of the water. I was tremendously glad to be out of the water. I was saved!

When I glanced at my house few days later, I couldn't find the lovely house on York Road but a huge area filled with mud, scattered with bricks, pieces of wood, broken trees and branches. The flood had left its mark not only in our house but also on our lives — we had lost our home and our dreams were shattered.

**NOW YOU ARE A MAGICIAN**

**Find the Lady**

'Find the Lady' is a classic trick normally accomplished by well practised sleight of hand. This is an easier version, but just as effective.

You will need to make a special card like the one shown overleaf. This is simply a Two of Clubs with part of a Queen of Hearts glued to it.

In addition to this special card, you will need a Joker and Three of Clubs.

Assemble the cards as shown in the second picture, making certain that the Joker is completely hidden behind the Three of Clubs.

Show the cards to your audience and draw attention to the fact that there is a red Queen between the two black cards. Turn the fan of cards over, spreading the two front cards (the Three and the secret Joker) apart as you do so.

Ask someone to pull out the Queen. Naturally he will take the centre card.

When he turns over what he thought was the Queen, he will be astonished to find that he has ended up with the Joker!