

The Missing Piece By Claire Thom

I'm a join the dots of Celtic freckles and my greeny-blue eyes are just like my dad's. His family tree is broad branches filled with stoic Scots. But my mum is a solitary leaf. Adopted as a baby, her history remains a mystery. Nothing but a yellowing scrap of paper with her mother's name and age, 19, and a blank space where her father should have been.

In the sun, my dad and I redden and resemble ripe tomatoes, while my mum and brother turn a fine shade of mahogany. This dark hair and skin are clues to whoever created my mum. Her love of languages, which she passed on to me, is another piece of this unfinished puzzle.

I sometimes let my imagination wander back to 1946 post-war Glasgow and a tall, dark stranger who I would have called Grandpa. Did he even know he had a daughter? Was he from another country? Is he still alive?

I'll never know what happened to that young woman, who would have been my Grandma, and what she must have gone through. The pain of never seeing her baby girl grow up to become such a wonderful lady.

But it doesn't matter that I don't have all the pieces of this family jigsaw because so much of who I am I owe to my own dear mum. That is all I really need and for that I will always be so grateful.