

Who Do You Think You Are? By Branka Kringas

I was born and grew up in Serbia. I knew two generations before me and heard stories about generations before them. They were all Serbian.

Here is one of many stories.

My paternal grandmother's father had a printing business. When his son was old enough he joined him. Two more sons followed. The father fell ill and died, as did the subsequent sons. They all had lung problems. It was found out unfortunately too late that the ink they used was toxic. How sad.

When I was 22 my family and I came to Australia. I met George at the University of NSW. We were both studying Architecture.

George was born in Australia. His parents come from Arcadia in Greece. After George graduated we married and we had a son who is called Damian.

He is half Greek and half Serbian. Finally, my family tree has a bit of spice.

When Damian was a child my family called him 'Balkanac' (Balkanats) a person from The Balkans, a peninsula in the South of Europe. Greece and Serbia are situated there.

'I am not Balkanac. I am Australian,' Damian complained.

When Damian was ten years old I took him to Europe to show him around. He loved Greece and Serbia, also he loved their people and cultures. He didn't mind my relatives calling him Balkanac.

At school Damian met Killara when they were eight years old. At High School they met again. Both Killara's grandmothers are Australian. One grandfather is French and the other German. A great mixture.

Damian and Killara's children, Molly and Max, are an even greater cocktail. They are a quarter Greek, a quarter Serbian, a quarter Australian, an eighth French and an eighth German.

Next Tuesday Molly and her partner Paul are going to get married. Paul is half Greek and half Maltese. It was hard to work out what mixture their children will be but I succeeded. They will be three eighths Greek, a quarter Maltese, an eighth Australian, an eighth Serbian, a sixteenth French and a sixteenth German. Mostly Greek.

My family tree is simply Serbian before me and very colourful after me. Who am I? I was born in former Yugoslavia, Serbia. I have been living in Australia so far for 67 years. I have strong sentiments for both Serbia and Australia but I can never watch Novak Djokovic play tennis with an Australian player.