

Confederation 75 Category, Literary Section

Bridget A. Ricketts, Mount Pearl

Pieces of a Puzzle (an excerpt)

As the argument swirled around the table, Lottie's quiet sniffle cut through the tension. The room fell silent as all eyes turned toward her. She dabbed her eyes with the corner of her napkin and gave a small, shaky smile.

"Stop, Annie. You sound like Nan." Lottie looked directly at her sister. "I always liked sharing my birthday with Canada. It made me feel special."

Aunt Annie flustered and cleared her throat. "Ah, Lottie," she said, her voice tender. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset you. My big mouth does sound like Nan sometimes. And yes, you've always loved Canada. I suppose... I just never felt the same way."

"And I love Canada too, Gran," Marie said, her voice bright but steady. "I love the True North Strong and Free. I always have. Canada's not perfect, but what country is? What I admire is how it respects different cultures and lets them flourish instead of trying to erase them."

Marie glanced around the table, meeting the eyes of each person. "I don't think we lost who we were when we joined Canada. Being away has shown me more than ever how special and unique this island is. We're still Newfoundlanders, with our music, our stories, and our way of life. But now we're part of something bigger too. That doesn't take away from us. It adds to us."