Hanging out at Delmas- p. 33-38

When he can’t find a job and money starts running out Garnet starts staying at Delma’s. He talks to her about being in foster homes, feeling like a loner, and about empty Christmas and the loneliness he feels inside. But he never talked about Indians and never tried to hang out with any. Garnet gets an afro perm in his hair as he tries to connect to his new black family. One day while hanging out with Lonnie they come across a couple of scruffy Indians asking for change. Garnet steps back while Lonnie gives them a couple dollars. Lonnie tells Garnet that he can’t run away from who he is his whole life. Garnet says he doesn’t care about that. Lonnie insists that he will never know if he doesn’t try and find out and that he thinks Garnet is missing out on something important. Garnet still feels embarrassed about being Indian. One day a drug dealer named Curtis and Garnet were trying to sell cocaine. Garnet gets busted by the police and gets sentenced to jail for trafficking for 5 years. He is sent to a work farm at a minimum security prison.

Life in jail- p.38-42

Garnet talks about fate and how mail comes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. One day he receives a heavy brown envelope with a postmark from Kenora Ontario. He opens it up to find a thick letter, and a bunch of pictures of Indians he doesn’t know. He notices some resemblances to himself in the pictures. He reads the letter, and it is from a guy named Stanley Raven who says he is his brother. He told Garnet the story of how he was taken away and how they had searched for years but hadn’t been able to find him. He finds out his brothers is a social worker and had talked someone into looking up Garnet’s file and had managed to track him down. Garnet finds out he has a huge extended family that love him and want him to come home. He finds out about his brother and sister, and his mother, and how she never gave up that her baby would come home one day. He also invites Garnet to write to him and tell him about his life, as well as ask him to come home when he gets out. Garnet describes a cold wind going through him as he read the letter and how he feels like crying for the first time he can remember. He tells Delma and Lonnie about the letter and they encourage him to reconnect with his family. Garnet is apprehensive and nervous. He is worried about not knowing what to do or what to say. Lonnie and Delma tell him it doesn’t matter and that family is family. They encourage him to write his brother. So Garnet agrees to write.

Writing to Stanley- p.43-47

Garnet writes to Stanley and finds out that a room is being set aside for him at their house in White Dog and that everyone is excited about him coming home. He is told not to worry because everyone knew he couldn’t speak Ojibway and that he would need time to get used to things. He finds out his brothers and sisters, even though they had been in the foster system, had gotten to know their family. Stanley writes to Garnet once a month. The more Garnet finds out, the more he looks forward to going home. Garnet is discharged and he is 25. He gets out of jail and spends some time celebrating, and as a result misses the people that were supposed to meet him at the bus station to take him home. As he heads home he starts getting a little scared but he also starts finding things feel more familiar. He describes how people stare at him when he arrives, with his afro picked out to about 3 feet around his head, mirrored shades, a yellow silk shirt, lime green baggy pants and platform shoes, with 3 gold chains around his neck. He finds out it is a ways to White Dog, about 80 km, and that it will cost $60 to get there. The man in the taxi tells him he doesn’t look like to Indians around there.

Arriving in White Dog-p. 47-52

He arrives in White Dog and notices signs along the road with bullet holes that say no admittance without permission. He describes the village as looking like something out of a foreign documentary with houses that looked like they were about to fall down and in disrepair. There were dead looking automobiles everywhere, with scruffy kids running around, missing telephone poles, outhouses and aluminum trailers. As he arrives about 50 people gather around to get a look. When he gets out everyone is silent at first and then they surround him. Kids are giggling and trying to touch his hair. He says “S’app;nin?” and people start talking. Some talk about how much he looks like his brother. One big guy comes up with shiny eyes and tears running down his face, saying Garnet, Garnet, Garnet, Garnet. This was his brother. His Brother says it has been 22 years since he has seen him. Garnet also starts crying. Stanley throws his arm around him and introduces Garnet as his brother. Everyone starts coming up to shake his hand. Humour abounds as good-natured comments are made about his hair and his clothes. Stanley asks why he wasn’t at the bus. Garnet says nothing and his brother says that all that matters is that he is there now.

Keeper-52-57

Keeper starts out talking about how people from the government have been taking kids for a long time. He uses humour to talk about the irony of how the movies always show Indians stealing children but it is the white people who have been actually stealing children. He talks about how he figures the white people think they are doing first nations peoples a favour by raising the kids up proper with a good education, but that all they are doing is raising a whole new type of Indian. He calls them apples because they are red on the outside (First nations) and white on the inside, but says that it is not respectful, especially because it isn’t their fault. He says they have lost a generation of children through residential schools, and then through children’s aid (foster care). He says these schools were the beginning of how they started losing their way as a people and that not only can you not change what a person is, that you shouldn’t. Keeper talks about how people have a right to be who they are and how white people don’t seem to understand that. He says that it isn’t the white people’s fault though because they have lost touch with nature and quit learning the natural way of things. This puts them in a constant struggle for control that they can’t win whereas first nations peoples find the rhythm of the world and learn to walk with it.

He talks about how things have changed from being a lot of first nations peoples very strong in their culture to only a handful. To him this means that his passing down of culture and tradition is much more important because so few know it now. He believes that they need the traditions, and respect for nature to survive. He goes on to say that learning the culture is not enough, that a person must practice it and live the culture, to be strong. Keeper believes you must know the reason why these cultures and traditions exist to be truly Indian. This is what he believes must be passed on and remembered. The white people keep coming in different ways, taking children and introducing new ways, and the only way to stay strong is to remember the old ways, and respect them. This is why he helps Garnet to find his way. He teaches Garnet about respect first and only then does he share other knowledge such as hunting. He learns to be honest before being a storyteller, and learns to be Indian so he can survive.