**Book 1: Plot notes**

**Keeper: A Prologue (pg. 1-5)**

In this section Keeper talks about how things are different in the old days, when fishing, hunting and trapping were good and people had respect for the land compared to now where people just exploit the land. He talks about the difficulty that the younger generation has maintaining a balance between the traditional and the modern way of doing things. He talks about his discussions with Garnet, and telling him that the old days are never gone because tradition passes that respect for the land on from generation to generation. He says that everyone is a tourist, looking for a guide to help us through life. He talks about how the white man has gotten into the habit of speeding through life, and has lost their connection to the land. He says this confuses young people who want shiny fast things but don’t want to let go of the world that is slower and more familiar. He then introduces the boy (Garnet) and explains that Garnet knows this and is fresh from the city, not really knowing if he is Indian or Anishnabe, and that he is lost, and that this story is about how he finds his way.

**Garnet –pg. 5-8- White Dog reserve part 1**

The narrator describes how to get to the White Dog reserve. He recalls some positive memories about beautiful natural area. He describes the area as containing a feeling of mystery and magic, that comes from the pure wild spirit of the land. He also describes the place as his home now, but that he was gone for a long time. He explains that the people living there are Ojibway, and that most people have never heard of the Ojibway. He also explains that while sociologists describe the people as hunting and gathering Indians, or northern woodlands people, that they call themselves the Anishnabe, which means good people in Ojibway. The reserve is described in modern day terms as being relatively poor, with few jobs except for tourists. The way of life is not as modern as other places. They get water from the lake during the winter, hang up their clothes to dry and use outhouses. Many people do not use electricity very much, if at all.

**Garnet- pg. 9-11-White Dog reserve part 2**

The narrator introduces himself as Garnet Raven. He says his family has lived on the White Dog reserve since Treaty 3 was signed in the 1870’s. The Raven is also the name of the messenger in the animal world and Keeper has told him that he was supposed to be a storyteller because of that. We find out he lives with his mother in a small house. He describes the village, where the only electricity and phones are located in the 6 houses in that area. People are poor, and they have few amenities, including a ball diamond and a boarded hockey rink. They play bingo and enjoy the simpler things in life. He enjoys the small pleasures in life- his mothers wrinkled brown face, and smile, the sun going down, and the magic of the land. He describes the magic associated with the land, and explains that it is not magic how we normally think of it, but more of a spiritual connection that teaches you how to live with each other. It is a common magic that brings everyone together.

**Garnet- pg. 11-16 Garnet gets taken away**

Garnet starts by saying he disappeared at the age of 3. He was taken from him home and put in foster homes, disappearing from his real home until the age of 25. We find out he has been back home for 5 years. He describes how his family used to live the old way. They lived in canvas tents, and trapped, hunted and fished off the land. They were happy. The first words he spoke were Ojibway, and the first sounds he heard were of the land. His mother told him he liked to wander when he was little, and would get out of the tent. They got tired of chasing him so they created a harness so he could wander outside but he still got away. One day some people came from Ontario Hydro and told the family they were building a dam, and that it would flood their traditional trap lines. The family had no say even though they had trapped there for years; no one had ever told them about ownership or title. Since the area was off the reserve it was owned by the hydro company and their family had to move. There were no jobs or houses available on the reserve at the time so they had to move to town. It was hard for the family to adjust to this new way of life. The town was also very racist and first nations peoples were not welcomed or wanted. As a result their parents kept to themselves, and the kids were left in the care of their granny who was 65. The way of looking at family was different between first nations culture and white culture. People were looked after by extended family all the time, unlike in white culture. When the Ontario Children’s aid society saw that the children were being looked after by their granny and didn’t (in their eyes) seem to be taken care of properly, the children ended up on a farm outside of Kenora, in the custody of Children’s aid. About a year later, Garnet was taken away from his brothers and sisters and put in another home by himself. The foster family they had been with took care of a lot of kids. They had to sleep on bunk beds and had to help out around the farm. His brothers and sisters found out he was being taken away but they thought it was better for him not to know so he was just taken away, and didn’t see his family until 20 years later.

**Garnet- pg. 16-20 Garnets experience growing up**

Garnet talks about how by the time he made it back home he was lost. He did not think of himself as Indian and he didn’t want to be Indian. He talks about during his entire childhood he was always the only Indian, and nobody told him who he was, where he came from or what was going on. He was moved around in foster homes for 12 years, staying in each for very short periods of time. He thought of himself as a brown white guy. During the 60’s he tells us that people didn’t learn about first nations peoples, except through television and books. Television contained stereotypes of first nations peoples as savages on the war path. Books were filled with how Europeans had discovered Canada, despite needing a guide to find it, or were carbon copies of the television versions of Indians. First nations peoples were stereotyped as being lazy, drunken bums living on welfare, mooching on street corners and needing direction. He describes a memory of breaking the rules in one of his foster homes and being driven by the man of the house into the Indian section of town, where drunks and dirty looking people were pointed out, and he was told that if he didn’t smarten up that he would turn out just like them. He talks about playing cowboys and Indians, and always having to be the Indian, and breaking into tears, without anybody understanding why, to which he explains that he doesn’t know how to be an Indian. He grew up embarrassed about being an Indian and afraid of meeting a real one, in case he said or did anything wrong. So he pretended to be other nationalities like Mexican, Chinese, Hawaiian, or Polynesian. If that didn’t work he would pretend to be a famous kind of Indian like Apache, Sioux, Cherokee or Comanchee. He didn’t want to be Passamaquoddy, Flathead, Dogrib or Ojibway.

**Garnet runs away- p. 20-24**

He starts out talking about falling in love with the Blues when he is twenty. It helped him deal with the loneliness and moving around that he had been doing. It also made him feel connected to the land. He talks about an Indian country-western singer named Wally Red Sky, who tells him that Indians are more tuned into country because it is about wide-open spaces and riding horses, which is more Indian than getting drunk and crying over lost women, like the blues does. He spent a lot of time feeling bad and when he heard the blues they fit with him, and helped him take the first step to returning home. He explains that he ran away from foster homes when he was 16 and went wandering all over hitch-hiking until he got to Toronto in 1977. He describes how he used to run con games on people and would leave before people caught on. He spent time as a homeless Hawaiian person, a half Chinese guy looking for his father, and a Mexican-Apache boxer who had quit fighting after killing someone in a bar fight. He says this might have had to do with him being a story teller, as he was avoiding being Indian.

**Garnet meets Lonnie Flowers- P. 24-33**

Garnet had just made some money working on a railroad gang and hits Toronto looking for some new clothes and a girlfriend. Then he meets Lonnie Flowers, a tall, rangy black guy who hangs out downtown selling pot and playing pool. Lonnie calls him over to see if he wants to buy some pot and recognizes that he is new to town. Lonnie is very welcoming to Garnet. Lonnie asks Garnet his name and calls him out on pretending to be Hawaiian. Garnet tries to leave and Lonnie tells him to stay. Lonnie starts giving Garnet a hard time and Garnet tells him to leave him alone and that he was minding his own business. Lonnie tells him he is right and introduces himself as Lonnie Flowers. Garnet then tells Lonnie his real name. Lonnie recognizes that Garnet is Indian. For the first time, Garnet feels as if someone knew he was Indian and it didn’t matter to them. They end up in a tavern and we find out Lonnie is a pretty well known and popular guy. Lonnie introduces Garnet to some people as a Hawaiian Indian. Garnet notices how at ease Lonnie is with his friends and wishes he could be that way. At the bar a group of people come in, who end up being Lonnie’s family. Garnet is introduced. Then the music starts and Garnet feels like it is something he has never heard before. Delma, one of Lonnie’s family notices and makes a comment about how he has the blues in a bad way. Garnet is asked what kind of Indian he is. Garnet says he guesses he must be a Canadian Indian and that he was raised in foster homes and doesn’t remember much else. Another guy, Truman, after hearing the story remarks that it seems like “the Indians are the niggers now”. Garnet explains that he doesn’t know his family but he is old enough to be his own person. The others tell him that everyone needs family and that you need to know your family history to know who you are. Garnet remarks how lucky they are to have that connection. They end up dancing and hanging out.