57-60

Garnet starts out by talking about things he notices about Indians, and how they are laughing all the time. He talks about how lots of times white people view this as them being simple, but that, as Keeper says, laughing is about as Indian and bannock and lard. The teachings are filled with humour because people listen to what you say, and this helps pass on learning. He also talks about teasing being a big part of life and that it is a way of showing affection.

He remembers meeting the family for the first time and expecting a big dinner and family welcome but that it wasn’t like that at all. Instead he enters the home and everyone makes teasing comments about his outfit and his haircut. Garnet remembers Stanley holding on to him, to make sure he didn’t bolt for the door. Then Stanley introduces him to his sister Jane, who greets him with a huge long huge, filled with tears. She asks Garnet if he remembers her but he says he doesn’t really. He gets introduced to other members of the family and he notices 2 things. First everyone seemed to treat him like someone they had always known and like it was as if he was someone they had always known. Second was that his other brother Jackie and his mother weren’t there. He talks about being scared about meeting his mother after all this time, and wonders why she isn’t there. He felt confused.

61-68

He goes for a walk with Stanley and Jane. He tells them he is feeling a bit weird. Stanley tells him it’s ok and that everyone has been waiting for him and want him to stay with them. Garnet tells them he isn’t sure if he can handle being away from the city and staying in White Dog. His brother says there isn’t anything to handle, and that while it might be hard for him to understand, that everyone had been waiting for this day to come and praying for Garnet to come home. He tells Garnet that he doesn’t need to handle himself and just to be himself. His sister tells him he might look more like a parakeet than a Raven but he is family. She says he should stay and let them get to know him. Garnet tells her he doesn’t even know himself.

As they walk Stanley tells Garnet that they (Garnet and his brothers and sister) used to spend time walking and throwing rocks into the lake when he was three, before he was taken away. Stanley tells Garnet that when they threw rocks and it made the loud splashing sound Garnet used to laugh, which made them all roll around and laugh. Garnet listens and says it seems like they seem to remember it like it was yesterday but he doesn’t remember anything. Garnet also says he feels like he is part of a scam where he is the patsy because he just doesn’t remember. Stanley tells him no one wants anything from him except for him to stay. Garnet tells them he doesn’t even know why he came. Stanley says maybe it is so he can find that out. Garnet talks about feeling mad all his life, because he had lost pieces of his life, like missing pieces of a puzzle. He asks them if that makes sense. Stanley and Janet say it does.

Stanley tells Garnet that he has two choices. He can split and figure it was never going to work anyhow or he can start putting the pieces of the puzzle back together. Both Stanley and Janet tell Garnet they will understand whatever decision he makes, but to please keep in touch if he does. Garnet asks for time to think about it. Then he asks where his mother is and asks if she split. Stanley says no and tells Garnet where his mom’s house is and that she will be back the next morning. Garnet asks Stanley if she didn’t want to see him. Janet tells him that his mom is scared of seeing him just like Garnet is scared of seeing her because she’s scared he will be mad, or hate her, or won’t like her or will turn around and disappear again, or that she has lost the right to be his mom. Stanley tells Garnet that his mom never gave up hope that he would make it back home and that she even gave up marrying someone because she refused to leave the reservation in case he came back, because she loved Garnet more.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 68 | * Garnet asks how his Mom knew he would come back because he didn’t know. Stanley says she just had a feeling. Garnet says it doesn’t explain why she wasn’t there and that he was scared too.   Jane asks him what he is scared of. Garnet says he is scared his mom won’t like him because he’s not like them, not Indian and wonders how she could be proud of him when he’s more black than Indian and just got out of jail. He also says he is scared that if she doesn’t like him he doesn’t know where he’ll go if he doesn’t fit in there. Garnet says he wishes Stanley had never found him. |
| 69 | * Stanley tells him he has always been Indian and always will be. He tells him he might have learned different but something will wake up inside him again but if he leaves he might never find the missing pieces of the puzzle of his life. He also says their Mom had just as much stuff running around in her head as Garnet does and that it is harder for her because Garnet never had to live with the memory of having a baby and the feeling of being responsible for losing it. |
| 70 | * Jane tells Garnet some of the family history. He finds out his mother and father were never married. That instead they lived the Ojibway way and talked about the roles of men and women in marriage as spiritual, mental, emotional and philosophical equals. She also told him about the sacred manner they had to live with each other and the respect that was expected by the Creator. |
| 71 | * Garnet finds out his Grandfather, Harold Raven joined his parents in a ceremony. Jane also tells Garnet about the sacred role of children in marriage and that they represented the spiritual union of male and female spirit, and were on loan from the Creator. His Dad wanted the kids to have the mom’s last name because of his respect for the fact that mothers gave life and he wanted them to have her name. Jane tells Garnet how his parents were devastated when he and his siblings were taken away. They thought they had failed and because they didn’t understand the system or speak English very well they didn’t know what to do. Both his parents went a little crazy and started drinking. |
| 72 | * After a couple years his mother decided to go back to the reservation and try to move on but his Dad, John Mukwa, wasn’t strong enough to move on. The wounds of losing his children cut him deep and no amount of drinking would take the hurt away. He ended up living on his own in the bush and ignoring everyone, including Garnet’s mom |
| 73 | * Garnet finds out his Dad was found one foggy morning on the shore of the Winnipeg river. Some thought he fell off the railway bridge but others thought he might have taken his own life. Jane tells Garnet that he was born from love and that all he has to do is want it. She also says they hold on to the missing pieces of the puzzle and will be there whenever he wants to figure them out. Garnet thanks Jane for telling him. |
| 74 | * Garnet finds out Meegwetch means Thank you in Ojibway but that it means more,that it means you’ve given me with honour. Garnet thinks about all the things he has been told and all the loss that his being taken away had caused. He wakes up and finds a note pinned onto his door. |
| 75 | * The note said that Garnet’s mother and brother would be back at around 9am that morning. Garnet thinks about meeting his mother. He realizes that he wants to know more about her. He waits nervously for them to arrive. |
| 76 | * Garnet’s brother Stanley arrives first. He doesn’t say anything but shakes Garnet’s hand. Then he saw his mom and she starts whispering his name over and over while crying softly. She looks at him and says “Garnet. Garnet. Garnet. My boy. My boy. My baby boy.” |
| 77 | * Garnet and his mother hug and both start sobbing quietly. As they hold each other Garnet feels a magical feeling about their breathing which starts to get slower and deeper, so that he can lose himself in the heartbeat. He begins to feel more relaxed and safe. He realizes he had felt this way in the past. |
| 78 | * It takes a while for Garnet and his mom to start speaking to each other because neither one is sure what to say. They just do a lot of being quiet, smiling and staring at each other. Garnet has a nap and then sees his mom sitting beside the fire outside. He decides to go keep her company. |
| 79 | * His mom sees him coming and tells him to sit beside her. She says something to him in Ojibway but he doesn’t understand her. She says to him “don’t speak Indyun, eh?” He tells her he never learned. She tells him it is easy and explains that what she said to him “nuhmutabin” means sit. Garnet tries to say it and she helps him. It starts getting easier as he practices. He yells it out at a group of people walking by and they look at him weird and wave back. His mom laughs. |
| 80 | * His mom asks him if it was tough in jail. He says “kinda” and that you learn to keep to yourself. His mom starts to talk to him about how they used to sit around the fire like they ear doing when he was small. Garnet says he doesn’t remember. She says it’s ok and that she remembers for both of them. Garnet asks if she remembers everything and she says yes, that she remembers everything. Garnet says he doesn’t blame her. |
| 81 | * His mom says that she blamed herself and that his dad did too. She explains that they didn’t know what to do and that they searched for them for over a day before a letter came explaining what was going on. She says they never understood and they didn’t know anything about the system and thought they had failed him. She tells him that his sister found her 2 years after it happened and told her the other boys were ok but she didn’t know what had happened to Garnet. She tells him she was drinking and that soon she sobered up and started asking for visiting rights and eventually got them, and that his three siblings managed to stay together in the foster home. She explains that his father never forgot or forgave them and that he fell apart inside. |
| 82 | * She tells him that his Dad died about 3 months after that. Garnet asks his mom if she thinks his Dad would have liked him. She tells him yes and explains how his Dad used to sing songs to her belly at night and sleep with his head on her belly when she was pregnant with him. Garnet thinks about his father and looks up into the sky and sees a little star come into view and he called it the Bear Star. He knows that whenever he feels lost or lonely he could come out and look for the star to talk to his father. |
| 83 | * As they sit by the fire Garnet tells his Mom that he knows his father’s name now, John Mukwa, but he doesn’t know her name. She tells him her name is Alice Raven but asks him to call her Ma. He agrees. She asks if Garnet wants to know why she likes to come out and sit by the fire so often, even in the winter. Garnet says yes. His mom explains that “us Indyuns, we sing songs all the time”. She explains that songs are as important as prayer and that they sing to the creator for all kinds of things and that when she lost Garnet she wanted to sing a song for him to help protect him and keep him safe. |
| 84 | * She also said she hoped the song would bring him home sometime. But she couldn’t think of the words. But after a while she thought of the right words and she had been singing it for over 15 years. She asks if Garnet wants to hear it. He agrees and she starts singing. “Bih’kee-yan,bih’kee-yan, bih’kee-yahn” The one word was repeated through the whole song. Garnet asks what the song means. |
| 85 | * Garnet’s mom says it means “Come home, come home, come home” Then his mom hugged him and asks Garnet to come and stay with her in her house. Garnet agrees. He stays outside and listens to the sounds in the night. He thinks about coming home as a “James Brown Indian” and the strange talking, strange looking people who opened up their reserve and their hearts to him. Instead of feeling like a wind was rushing through him he feels it breezing by his ears. He thinks of the years he has spent searching to find pieces of his lost life and puzzle. Then he thinks of his mom singing the song, night after night, over and over, wishing him home. |