Book 1:

Starts with a segment from Keeper.  He is an elder in the story who gives us perspective on what Garnet is going through and some historical context to the events happening in the story.

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 Anishnable, 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.

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.

57--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.

Garnet Raven is Ojibway and is taken from by child services at the age of two, and separated from his family.  He goes from foster home to foster home.  At the age of 16 Garnet runs away, hitchhiking and being anything but Ojibway.  He finally settles down in Toronto where Garnet meets Lonnie Flowers and his family.  They introduce Garnet to blues music and the way of family, as well as fitting in.  After a while Garnet starts dealing drugs and gets busted.  He spends five years in jail.  His long lost brother writes Garnet a letter while he is in jail saying that everyone misses him and they want him to come home.  When Garnet gets out of jail he goes to White Dog and lives with his Mother.  He feels like a fish out of water.

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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.

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| Pg. 68  69  70  71  72 | * 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. * 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. * 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. * 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. * 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 his mom. * 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. * 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. * 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. * Garnet’s brother Jackie 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 |

Keeper ‘n me plot notes pg. 87-120

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| 87 | * Start of Book 2- Beehahbun * Garnet talks about the lake being a reflector and that a person’s voice can carry for miles. He recalls how they would listen to Myron Fisher and Mabel Copenace talking all lovey dovey on the lake and then tease them by repeating what they said later on. |
| 88 | * Garnet talks about how the lake used to be how they could get a hold of someone on the other side of the lake by yelling across. Garnet says he has been at the reserve for 4 months. His mom cut off his afro after about 3 days. Garnet tells his mom how he used to pretend to be Mexican and she laughs and says if they saw him now they would call him a Mexican hairless. |
| 89 | * Garnet talks about how making white dog his home wasn’t easy and how he feels like a fish out of water, and it being scary. But he gets more comfortable as time goes on. He talks about there not being much to do other than hang around with his brothers and their friends. He talks about it being hard to fit in not speaking the language or having done anything like hunting or fishing. |
| 90 | * Garnet talks about how living with his Ma helps him feel comfortable. He remembers sitting around a fire listening to Wally Red Sky singing his favourite country and western songs. Wally is not a great singer and he compares his high notes to the sounds you hear in the bush in rutting season and his low notes to a moose after four hours of feeding on skunk cabbage. But he says you couldn’t find a nicer guy than Wally. In the middle of Wally’s singing they here voices across the lake. |
| 91 | * They hear a hoo across the lake and then they hear a message for asking if Garnet Raven is there and letting him know that Keeper wants to talk to him soon. Wally wonders what Keeper wants with Garnet. |
| 92 | * We find out that Keeper had been the local drunk for a long time. Garnet had wondered how he got the name Keeper when he couldn’t seem to keep anything. We also find out that Keeper went away to dry out and had come back. |
| 93 | * Garnet remembers meeting Keeper the first day he got to the reserve. He remembers carrying him out of the bush when he passed out and talks about the need to respect older folks. Garnet heads over to see what Keeper wants. He stops by his Mom’s and she says Keeper is looking for him. Garnet asks what for? His mom says he might want to help him find his way around. Garnet asks if Keeper talked to her about him. |
| 94 | * Garnet’s Ma tells Garnet that Keeper and her are friends and were together in residential school, and had been drunk a few times too. Garnet asks where Keeper is. His mom tells him he is in the old cabin around the bay where Garnet’s grampa lived. Garnet tells us about his Grampa who was the oldest person on the reserve when he died (98). He never learned English and was one of the last traditional Ojibway people on the reserve. He had made a sweat lodge near the cabin, made tobacco offerings and held pipe ceremonies. |
| 95 | * Garnet tells us how when he hears talks about spirits and ceremonies that he envisioned drums going crazy, people dancing around in strange get ups, war whoops and planning a raid on unsuspecting settlers. He talks about the hidden parts of his people worrying him the most. Garnet remembers watching his Uncle Gilbert praying and sprinkling tobacco by the base of a pine tree when he took him out deer hunting. The tobacco offering showed respect for the animal they were going to take and a prayer for the hunt to be good. Garnet describes his mom always singing and praying and covering herself with the smoke from smoldering cedar, moss and sweetgrass. Garnet tells us he isn’t much of a religious guy. |
| 96 | * Garnet talks about his Grampa being a big believer and him belonging to a society called Midewewin. Some people called them medicine men but Garnet usually thinks of medicine men as painted up guys with scary faces. Stanley tried to explain it to Garnet but Garnet found it too complicated. He didn’t see the need to do anything like that to be Indian. He didn’t see others doing ceremonies and figured it was ok for him to leave it alone. Garnet sees the lights of the cabin from a long way off. |
| 97 | * Garnet seeks Keeper sitting in the doorway smoking his pipe. He tells Garnet “Ahnee” (an Ojibway greeting) Garnet tells him he is looking good. Keeper says he feels good too. Garnet says it must feel good and Keeper agrees. He says he hasn’t felt like this in a long time. Keeper tells Garnet he used to spend time with his Grampa a the cabin talking. |
| 98 | * Keeper says he knew his Grampa Harold since he was a small boy and that he was the last of the people who really knew about Midewewin. He asks if Garnet had heard about that. Garnet says he hasn’t heard much other than that they were medicine men. Keeper tells him they were the people’s guardians who taught and protected people, and used ceremonies and rituals to keep people healthy. They knew all about the plans, animals, teachings, the world, the universe. They made stories and legends for the people to learn from and made rules for behaving to help people get through things. Garnet asks what happened to them. Keeper says Time changed. |
| 99 | * Keeper says the people changed when the white people cam and started looking to white mens ways and forgetting about the ones who carried the knowledge. Keeper says most of them are gone now and people are just starting to realize they are missing something. Garnet asks him if he means that there isn’t anyone around anymore who knows those things. Keeper pauses for a long while and says “Almost no one” |
| 100 | * Keeper asks Garnet to come into the cabin because he wants to show him something. They sit by the fire and Keeper holds a large hand drum in his arms. He tells Garnet it was his grampas and that before that it was his grampas. It has been passed down for 300-400 years. Garnet asks where Keeper got it. Keeper says Harold gave it to him. Garnet asks who it belongs to. Keeper says it belongs to the people. He tells Garnet that Harold taught him some songs and when he died he made Keeper responsible for the drum and that he was the Drum’s keeper. Garnet asks if that is why they call him Keeper. Keeper says yes, but that it wasn’t really why. |
| 101 | * Keeper says Harold was his teacher. Picked him from all the boys on the reserve and said he had smarts and courage because he had run away from residential school and liked that Keeper wouldn’t let him take him away from there. He says he taught him all about the old ways and the Midewewin. He took him for walks and taught him about plants/animals and the ways of the world. Garnet asks if Harold taught Keeper to be a Midewewin. Keeper says no, because he walked away. He felt he was missing out by not being with friends so he didn’t learn enough to be a real teacher. Then Keeper says that the knowledge was inside him. Everything he gave him, and taught him stayed with Keeper. |
| 102 | * Keeper talks about how it still wouldn’t go away as he got older. He talks about how Harold never said anything to him but Keeper knew what he was trying to say but he didn’t want to hear it. He was busy being drunk and that when Harold died he just kept getting drunker. He tells Garnet that Garnet’s mom told him that he was the drum keeper. Keeper says the Drum holds the heartbeat of the people and when you play it you join the heartbeat of the universe and that it is a blessing from the land. He says that if you are the keeper you have to life life in a good way. |
| 103 | * Keeper explains that he felt very guilty, like he was a traitor. He knew he was responsible for the drum and how important it was for the people and felt guilty for walking away but also felt like he wasn’t worthy anymore. He tells Garnet the reason they started to call him Keeper was because he kept getting drunk and talking about being the keeper of the drum while crying about his grampa. They called him Keeper as a joke. He felt he couldn’t get sober because he thought it was too late. One day he got tired and decided to go away and sober up. Keeper thought about when Garnet came back and trying to find himself. Keeper tells Garnet he reminded him of himself. |
| 104 | * Keeper talks about how funny Garnet looked when he first came. He talks about Garnet being away for a long time and learning different ways. He tells Garnet he needs a guide to help him find his way around and help him learn things Indyun instead of white. Keeper says he also needs Garnet to help him too to guide him to win back the years he lost from being drunk just like Garnet lost years from being stolen. He tells Garnet it took a lot of courage to come back and that he can tell he is smart by how he observes everything around him. |
| 105 | * He tells Garnet is always watching and learning. He tells them they are both looking to find their way back. He says he needs to pay back a debt to give back what Garnet’s grampa gave him and to become the drum keeper, and to find another teacher to pass the learning on. Keeper says he wants to spend time with Garnet to walk around, look at things and be each other’s guides. Garnet thinks about it. |
| 106 | * Garnet thinks about all the pieces missing in his life and he says it sounds good and asks when they can start. Keeper says he can start as soon as the moon goes down. They will burn some edar, smudge and say a prayer. |
| 107 | * Keeper talks about how some people think Indyuns are getting high from smoking pipes. He talks about how when the missionaries came they saw Indyuns praying real strange and thought they needed help from being heathens. They said their way of praying was wrong. Keeper says true human beings have truth inside that is kind respectful and honest and learning from watching nature. He says the world will teach you everything you need to know if you watch long enough. |
| 108 | * Keeper talks about how the missionaries judged their way of life and praying without taking time to learn about it. He talks about how Indyuns pray lots and show thanks to the Creator for everything. He talks about how the missionaries told them to pray differently and out of respect they did, including praying for problems to disappear. When the Indyuns got up the discovered all their land was gone. |
| 109 | * Keeper says that fear is what causes people to try and control, destroy or change something, instead of taking time to understand. He says other people’s fear has made up a lot of Indyuns history. If they had asked them they would have told them they were only praying. He talks about smudging to help face each day’s truth and to remind us of the one great truth, that we all need help, Indyun or not. |
| 110 | * He says that this helps us behave in a good way and following the rules, being good to each other, help each other. He says that it helps you keep centered, your spirit and connects you to everything. He talks about him and Garnet burning cedar and using it to purify your body, heart and mind because it is the place the creator gave us to live. By finding our truth men who face their own truth each day are going to be humble kind and respectful, and know when you need to ask for help. |
| 111 | * Keeper talks about how when he was drinking he wasn’t operating from a center. Negative thinking and booze take you away from your truth and robs your spirit from you, living from head instead of your heart. Head gots no answers and heart has no answers. Everyone looks for a guide to live a good way. Keeper talks how burning up cedar brought him back to his center again. How he first of all got a hollow feeling in his belly that made him feeling afraid. |
| 112 | * Keeper talks how the smell hit something deep inside him and he cried deep and long for Harold, his shame and his fear and when he was done the hollow feeling was gone because he was back in his center. He talks about the need to fight to come back. He says that when you see Indyuns passing the smoke they aren’t getting high, they are getting deep. |
| 113 | * Keeper talks about the first light of morning being a big part of the Indian way and that people called in Beedhabun, first light. They used this time to gather for sunrise ceremonies and offer prayers for guidance through the day and it being a grateful time. Sleeping is usually called the half death, being in a different reality with dreams. Paying attention to dreams you can get a lot of understanding and our brains use dreams to help us catch up on what we miss during the day. The name Anishnabe means the good people and it came around because that is what you are praying for each day. |
| 114 | * Garnet talks about getting up before sunrise each day to spend time with Keeper and get to know the old ways. He talks about importance of living with respect. Keeper says Garnet finally learned the true meaning of “Indian time”. Garnet now does this every day. |
| 115 | * Garnet says that five years later seeing the landscape still has the same effect it had on him the first morning he saw it. Garnet describes the village as he sees it- small cabins, trails, bikes laying around, hides stretched out for scraping, fishing smoking set ups, cast off furniture, rusted swing sets, moose antlers, clotheslines and frozen wool longjohns bobbing up and down in the breeze. |
| 116 | * Around chief Isaacs house- new satellite dish and newer trucks. No trails. Indoor plumbing. Lots of modern buidings where the school teachers live, who come and go every year. |
| 117 | * Garnet continues describing the village. He talks about Doc and Mrs Tacknyk who have lived in the village and try to live with the people instead of trying to get them to change. He describes the community hall with the hockey rink and baseball diamond. |
| 118 | * He talks about the Ojibways being big on hockey and baseball as entertainment. He talks about how people listen to radio for entertainment. He talks about being introduced to his relatives and how everyone knows each other. He talks about the Ontario provincial police having a trailer on the reserve. |
| 119 | * He says that when the police are around no one speaks English and tells them never to look and Indian in the eyes because it is an insult or how moving your hands around a lot makes people more comfortable. They also teach them to speak Indian all wrong. He also talks about how they generally let them take care of trouble on their own and that they appreciate that. He describes the local band office. |
| 120 | * Garnet says most people only go to the band office on cheque day. He talks about welfare not being as insulting a thing when everyone is using it to live. Garnet talks about it being hard to adjust and being glad of finding a job. He talks about people making money off Americans in the tourist season and some of the funny stories there are about what happens when they come. |

Keeper ‘n me Book 2 plot notes- general (pg. 120-161)

* 120-127-Garnet shares stories of how people play tricks on American tourists when they come up to fish and hunt. (like his Uncle Gilbert playing the joke on the American Tourist making the fish blessing- OH WAH TA GOO FYAM)
* 127--Keeper talks about two kinds of silences. One if the smoldering angry kind people use instead of their fists and the other is the big open embarrassed kind when their mouths can’t move through the motions their hearts are going through. He says learning how to deal with it is the biggest struggle men have and that the real warriors are the ones who never surrender to the silence and that the only stone faced Indians out there are statues.
* 128-132-Garnet talks about having an Indian heart inside you so you don’t get swallowed up in the influence of the outside and look brown but aren’t carrying a brown heart on the inside. To bring people back they have to learn how to be what the Creator created you to be and learn how to be a good person, because then you learn how to be a good Indian. Garnet starts learning more Ojibway and starts to fit in more, instead of them using him not knowing the language against him or silence. Once he started learning how to ask to learn about things he finds their attitudes changed. Garnet has a hard time figuring out why Jackie treats him with a stony silence .
* 133-135-Keeper does some drumming around the fire and starts a slow steady rhythm on the drum like those used in Round Dances which were big get together dances. Garnet tries drumming for the first time and loses the rhythm. His brother Jackie gets made and says real Indyuns have a feel for the drum and that Garnet shouldn’t be drumming city crap on the hand drum. He says Garnet isn’t an Indyun and has more black and white in him than Indian. Then he takes off.
* -135-139-Stanley tells Garnet he doesn’t know why Jackie is acting like that. He says maybe he took Garnet’s loss harder than others. He said Jackie didn’t like that Stanley went and got a university degree. Stanley describes it as stealing horses. By getting an education he is stealing ways of the white man to build up the Ojibway people. Stanley says Jackie is kind of wild inside and a lot like their father. He tells Garnet that Jackie punches the guy that took them away to the foster home in the face when he was only six. When he realized they had been taken away he got mean and when they came to take the rest of them, after Garnet was taken, Jackie took a rifle and pointed it at the guy as he drove up until he went inside. Garnet finds out Jackie hates social workers and blamed himself for Garnet being taken away.
* 139-144-Garnet looks through a family album with Jane. He sees pictures of Jackie with red bandanas and armbands. He finds out Jackie was in a group called AIM. (American Indian Movement). He finds out Jane and Jackie were involved in the 70’s and that the organization was trying to change the way the government and their people were dealing with problems. They also had an Ojibway warriors society. Jackie became a leader. They wanted the treaties to be honoured and promises to be kept. Garnet asks why Jackie is mad at him. Jane says he isn’t mad at him, and that Garnet is an innocent bystander. She explains how close Jackie was to their Dad. Jackie doesn’t know how to fight the system but he is still angry. He got arrested protesting but never managed to get much done despite how hard he tried. Seeing Garnet reminds him of all the hurt he felt and the unresolved issues he never managed to resolve. Jane says Jackie has a lot of bear in him.
* 144-156-Winter comes. Keeper talks with Garnet about Jackie and he says Jackie has a lot of bear in him and that Garnet needs to use the bear to get his attention. Garnet asks how. Keeper talks about how bears wrestle with each other and growl a lot, but always are close to each other. He tells him he has to be like a bear and play. Garnet tries to think of what to play and then hockey season comes along. Garnet joins the hockey team. His brother Jackie tells them he’s going to get killed on the ice but Garnet proves him wrong. Garnet and Jackie play hockey together, and they end up goofing around playing hockey and talking smack to each other. They bond in a way and afterwards Jackie expresses how he felt when Garnet was taken away, how angry it made him when Garnet was taken away, and how much he missed him. Then when Garnet came back all white, black and anything but Indian made Jackie find himself hating Garnet because of how he had changed and feeling helpless and afraid that if he got close to Garnet he would leave again. They start sobbing and hugging and make up. Garnet tells him about some of his life and how he feels about trying to become Indian again. Garnet finds out that Jackie doesn't talk to him because he feels like he didn't save Garnet when he was taken away by the social workers.
* 158-161- Keeper tells Garnet about Beedahbun, how it is the first light and how it connects to your life. Keeper gives Garnet words of wisdom and how being part of Beedahbun helps not becoming lost. They talk about their culture.
* Keeper n me plot notes Book 3 pg. 163-195 Soo-Wanee-Quay
* -pg. 163-168- Keeper is talking. He talks about the drum being the heartbeat of Mother Earth but that we often get too busy to listen. He talks about how we heard the heartbeat of our mother in the womb and that it made us feel safe. Then we come into the world and everything is noisy and loud. But when we hear the drumbeat it makes us feel good again, safe and warm. He says that it why they use the drum in the morning to remind us how we felt hearing it in the darkness when we were little. He says the drum teaches us that we have to live from the inside out. He says the drum is about motherhood and that women give power and life, which is why we call the land our Mother. Since land gives us life we need to treat it with respect and the drum is also about the spirit power of the female. He says the reason the drum is round is because the womb and the universe is round. He says when we come into life we come with two sets of gifts, those from the father and those from the mother. In order to be complete we have to balance those gifts, the ones that tell us to be strong and fearless, and gentle and nurturing. He says when people live with respect you can’t do anyone any harm. Respect gives you kindness, honesty, openness, gentleness, good thoughts and good actions. Only those that live in balance with the world can be centred and live with respect.
* -p. 168- Garnet talks about how there being two ways of doing things. The slow methodical Ojibway method and the slow non-methodical Ojibway method. Both work but take a lot of getting used to for someone used to living at city speed.
* -pg. 169-170-Garnet talks about how he is getting used to being on the reserve and the slow pace but that he is also going stir crazy wanting the flash and motion of life outside the reserve. He talks about Wilbert Fish and his buddies being really into hockey and that when work was involved in betting on things instead of money things got really intense. In springtime with the NHL playoffs they would huddle around the shortwave radio every night for a month. The radio was very important for entertainment.
* -Pg. 171-They talk about Bert Otter getting a bunch of money to get shortwave radios and setting up this for entertainment. People would tune in to get music or other radio programs and hockey.
* -p. 172- One night Wilbert and his buddies were listening to a hockey game from Winnipeg and Wilbert had a big bet on the Jets to win a hindquarter of Moose. Everyone was listening but the radio static was really high and hard to hear. Wilbert Fish got frustrated and smashes the shortwave radio against the wall, Bert Otter's radio. This cause Garnet to talk to Wally Red Sky about bringing a radio to White Dog because people were really depressed about losing the radio.
* - p 173-180-Everybody was "cranky" after the radio was smashed, which motivated the community to support the new radio station. Garnet convinces Wally to start Red Sky One Radio . We find out that Wally often has had big plans that don’t turn out great like one time when he tried to make a pair of snowshoes for his Grandpa and they end up falling apart because he never asked anyone for help. We find out Wally is a big dreamer.
* - pg.180-184-Wally starts announcing the coming of the White dog one radio network where people can subscribe. People start talking about different things that the radio station can bring in like bingo, music hockey and other things to the reserve on the radio.. Wally announces the unveiling of the “WHITE DOG ONE Network” People come and Wally starts talking about the subscription of $5 and that he will bring them radio programs from 6-10 pm every night.
* p. 184-188- Keeper tells Garnet how "people are gonna bump up against the outside world" warning him about the coming radios influence on White Dog. He tells them people are going to change and that it will throw off the balance of the community.
* p. 188-195 Wally starts up the radio station. He installs speakers and wires to everyone on the reserve who has signed up and is going to start up in 3 days. The radio station starts up and they start hearing some music. Then wally comes on as the radio host. He says the music will be by reservation only and that they will also get to listen to Wally between every record played. The community groaned. They also realize there won’t be bingo, hockey or request lines. People start to talk about how they can maybe make things work. Some people started bingo and talking about politics etc. Eventually everything balances out.