

*Indian Horse* by Richard Wagamese.

Chapters 1-11 Summary

Saul Indian Horse has hit bottom. His last binge almost killed him, and now he's a reluctant resident in a treatment centre for alcoholics, surrounded by people he's sure will never understand him. But Saul wants peace, and he grudgingly comes to see that he'll find it only through telling his story.

Saul begins his story, by going back in his family history to explain where his ancestors came from and how his family got their name Indian Horse from the white people. He tells about his grandmother having a gift to see spirits and visions.

Saul tells the reader that his parents were part of the Indian Residential School program, and that they have many problems because of their time spent there. They sometimes drink alcohol to get through the painful memories. We find out that Saul's sister was taken to the residential school before he was born, and the family never saw her again. They assumed she died. Saul's brother Benjamin is also taken when Saul was just four and Benjamin eight. It is very traumatic for the family.

Naomi, Saul's grandmother, feels they need to escape the white world and return to the place of their ancient ancestors in order to protect Saul as well as get away from the alcohol. It is there that they try and return to their traditional ways. Benjamin finds a way to escape the residential school and miraculously finds a way to his family. Tragically, he has developed TB, a lung disease, and he is dying. He eventually dies after a few weeks, and Saul's mother cannot handle that she has two dead children. Saul's parents decide to return to the white world and the

Catholic Church to bury Benjamin. They think that is better than Naomi's ways because they were forced to think that at the residential schools. They leave Saul with Naomi who refuses to go. They never return.

Saul and his grandmother must try and survive a journey to Naomi's brother's place. She is very old and Saul is just a child, and it is very hard for them. Their canoe gets damaged and Naomi freezes to death trying to keep Saul warm and protected. A car finds them, and they take Saul away to the Residential school.

Naomi and Saul