***Indian Horse***

**Chapter Questions 1-6**

DUE:

**Chapter 1**

1. The story is told as a first person narrative. What does this mean for the reliability of the events that are retold? How do you react, or feel, about Saul Indian Horse by the end of chapter 1?
2. Based on the descriptions of his own people and his comparison with nature, how important do you think nature is going to become in this novel? Write down one specific quote that shows the description of nature and identity that you notice.
3. Where do you think Saul is in chapter 1? What do you think they are trying to get Saul to do?
4. What has Saul lost? (End of chapter.)

**Chapter 2**

1. What are Zhaunagush?
2. Why did Saul’s ancestors react so strongly to the horse his great-grandfather brings to them? What do you think the horse may symbolize to the Ojibway people in this story?
3. What is the prophecy that Shabogeesick tells to his people on page 7? Why is this specific prophecy so important in this story? What do we know from history that may play a role in understand its importance?

**Chapter 3**

1. Who is Noami, and what is her role as a matriarch?
2. Where did Saul’s sister disappear to? Why is this event so important in his life?
3. This chapter hints strongly at foreshadowing. What is one prediction you could make about what might happen to Saul?
4. How does Saul’s mother and father react to this disappearance of his brother, Benjamin? Provide evidence to explain your answer.

**Chapter 4**

1. What is the “white man’s drink” Saul refers to?
2. Why is it important that he notices his parents become reliant on this drink?
3. Describe what Saul’s life was like during this time in the chapter.

**Chapter 5**

1. Where does Noami take the family? Hint: she calls it a specific name on page 17.
2. What does Benjamin have when he returns to the family? How does Saul’s family respond to this?
3. What is the significance of Naomi’s stories that she tells to the family? What does it mean that every time she tells a story, everyone (including the adults) become quite, and listen.

**Chapter 6**

1. When the group reaches God’s Lake, how would you describe their feelings in this place of nature?
2. When Saul is at the top of the ridge, he sees a vision of some kind. His grandmother explain this is part of his gift, as a seer he would see certain things that other could not. What do you think is the significance of this spiritual gift in Saul’s life as an Ojibway? After finishing this chapter, how do you feel for Saul now that you know this is something he claimed he has lost in the first chapter of the novel?
3. Saul’s strong connection with his ancestors have importance. What benefits do you believe he gets from this connection?

**Chapter 7**

1. How does Saul explain how he knows that God’s Lake belongs to his family?
2. What is the significance of the conversation about the Creator and God between Naomi and Saul’s aunt? (Page 25-26) What does Saul’s aunt believe, and what does Naomi say about the gift they receive and to whom they should be grateful? Find the specific quote and provide it as evidence.
3. What advice does Naomi offer to Saul’s aunt and mother about love? Write down the specific quote. Explain what you think it means.
4. What does Benjamin’s determination to finish the work, even while being sick coughing, tell you about his character?

**Chapter 8**

1. How does each member of Saul’s family react to Benjamin’s death? How do their reactions tell you more about their characters?
2. This chapter shows another argument between Naomi’s spiritual beliefs, and those of Saul’s mother. When we consider that Saul’s parents would have learned about Christian religious practices from residential schools, and that Naomi would have taught them the faith of the Ojibway people, what does it mean that Saul’s parents are adamant that Benjamin be buried according to Christian practice? (This is an important question, and you need a paragraph length answer on this one.)

**Chapter 9**

1. Why do you think the adults never return?

**Chapter 10**

1. This chapter starts off with the journey that Saul and his grandmother needs to make. What does some of the details about Saul’s grandmother’s actions tell you about her as a character?
2. How does Saul help him and his grandmother find the path through the forest?
3. Who dies at the end of the chapter?

**Chapter 11**

1. Where do they take Saul? How does he describe this place, and what it does to him?
2. What is the significance that Saul mentions there are no trees around the building, but only shrubs? Think of the role nature has played thus far.
3. What could it symbolize when the priests assign a new name for the children who enter the school? Think about identity
4. What is a heathen? What makes this work important to the story?

**Chapter 12**

1. What do the children call Saul at the school? Why do they call him this?
2. What does Saul describe it as when he mention how it felt to be removed from his family and nature? Provide the quote, from page 48.
3. Think about the stories of these children that Saul tells the reader in this chapter. If there was one thing you could say they all experienced, what would it be? What lesson does Saul learn about St. Jerome’s and the white people who work there?

**Chapter 13**

1. Why do the kids see themselves in the fish? Explain your answer only after reading the whole chapter.

**Chapter 14**

1. What is the significance of Saul’s recounting of all the deaths and different ways the children died?

**Chapter 15**

1. Who is Father Leboutilier, and what does he introduce Saul to?
2. Read the description of the hockey rink, the setting, and the players just before they start on page 57. What effect does the author create by using this poetic style of writing about the game? How do you think Saul feels about this moment?
3. What is another part of Saul’s gift that he discovers as he watches the hockey game? How does he link it with his ancestors?

**Chapter 16**

1. What does Saul do to get closer to the game? List some of his tasks and actions.
2. What is the significance in the moment: “My mouth would be open with glee and I would face the picture of Jesus hung there on the wall, my salvation coming instead through wood and rubber and ice and the dream of a game.” What message could the author be sending to the reader about Residential Schools and their successes or failures?

**Chapter 17**

1. Why do you think Saul believes that hockey becomes his salvation? Why do you believe he seeks it so fervently, and throws himself into it as much as he does?
2. This chapter starts to repeat the fact that Saul is much smaller than most people around him. It also mentions how he deals with his size. What could being small symbolize for Saul in his world and circumstances?
3. Saul’s grandmother gives him advice about life on page 65:

“We need mystery… Mystery fills us with awe and wonder. They are the foundations of humility, and humility, grandson, is the foundation of all learning.”

Explain what you believe this quote means. Do you think it can be considered universal advice? (Universal means it could apply to anyone, anywhere.)

**Chapter 18**

1. What happens for Saul to finally get his chance to play with the team?
2. What is the significance of the boys moving over so Saul has a spot to stand with them along the boards? What could it symbolize?

**Chapter 19**

1. What does Saul still wonder about?

**Chapter 20**

1. What is the significance of Saul’s small size, the large crowd, their taunting and teasing, and his team’s eventual victory in their first game? What role does Saul play in the match, and what universal lesson could a reader identify with / relate to in this chapter?

**Chapter 21**

1. Wagamese vividly describes some of the details of residential schools and the effects it has on Saul and the other children.

“I read once that there are holes in the universe that swallow all light, all bodies. St. Jerome’s took all the light from my world.” (43)

“St. Jerome’s was hell on earth.”

How has your understanding and feelings of residential schools changed since you’ve started reading the novel?

1. Find one event of life at St. Jerome’s that has been described thus far in the novel that has impacted you the most. Provide it as evidence, and explain why this sticks out in your mind.
2. What is “the Iron Sister”? How do the children and Saul feel about it? Look up some psychological effect that solitary confinement has on inmates. List a few.
3. Explain why you think the children never speak of what happens in the dorms at night.
4. Who are the oppressors in the story so far, and who are the victims?
5. Saul’s grandmother, Naomi, spoke of a Creator, while his family and the nuns and priests at St. Jerome’s speak of God. Naomi’s teachings encouraged love and acceptance, while St. Jerome’s teachings and use of Christian faith also spout the same beliefs – yet they are wrongly used, instead, to justify the horrible actions of those who wield power over the children. What might this tell you about how people interpret and use their religious teachings in the choices they make in life? (This is a very complex idea, and I strongly suggest you use about the length of a good paragraph to answer this question.)

**Chapter 22**

1. What becomes Saul’s escape from the horrors of the St. Jerome’s?
2. What does he do over the summer when the rink is melted?
3. Make a prediction about Saul and Father Leboutilier’s bond. Explain your answer.

**Chapter 23**

1. In this chapter (pages 88 and 89) Saul expresses his fear when he plays in towns. He says, “I feel kinda scared playing in town all the time. Like they expect me to be something that I don’t know how to be.” Why do you think Saul has this feeling? What do you think the townspeople expect Saul to be? Explain your answer.
2. This chapter brings forward the focus on stereotyping and racism when Saul is banned from playing in a game in town:

“Thirteen’s good for an Indian.” (89)

“It’s because I’m Indian, isn’t it?” (91)

Father Leboutilier attempts to explain to Saul why the townspeople are so upset about Saul’s excellent performance during hockey games; he claims that the white people believe hockey is “their game”, as if they’ve claimed ownership of it. How does this relate to the land and culture that was ripped away from Saul and other First Nations people?

**Chapter 24**

1. In this chapter we are introduced to Fred Kelly. What is your impression of him?
2. How does Saul feel about leaving St. Jerome’s? Provide evidence from the novel.

**Chapter 25**

1. The beginning of chapter 25 opens with the explanation of the name Manitouwadge. Throughout the novel thus far, Saul has paid close attention to always include the family given names to the children he meets in St. Jerome’s. He does NOT call them by their newly assigned Christian names, but instead, always mentions their entire name. For example: Angelique Lynx Leg, Lenny Mink, Perry Whiteduck, Shane Big Canoe, etc.

Considering what you know about identity, what is the significance of keeping part of the First Nations’ children’s names so prevalent in the novel? What might the author be trying to say to the reader?

1. Read page 99 where Saul describes the people, life, and culture of Manitouwadge. What signs of privilege do you notice? What is the “invisible line” drawn across the town, and what does it symbolize? Which signs of racism do you notice in this section?
2. Would you say that Saul has escaped persecution by leaving St. Jerome’s and entering this town? Explain your answer.
3. Describe the life in Fred and Marsha Kelly’s home. How does Saul feel about it?
4. Does Saul instantly get accepted into the new hockey team called “Moose”? What does he have to do to earn his place?

**Chapter 26**

1. Saul describes his life as part of the Moose hockey team throughout this chapter. Considering his tone, his descriptions, etc. would you say that he has reached a place of acceptance and happiness? Explain your answer.
2. Saul describes the long drives through the night with his team:

“Often, while the other were sleeping, I’d look out the window and watch flow by. Some night there would be a moon, and the shadows it created were spectacular. Trees became many-armed creature looming across the road. Lakes were shining phosphorescent platters. Ridges and scarps were fortresses capped with snow. Rovers were serpentine swaths of a deeper black. I loved every inch of it.”

His longing for nature is evident in this excerpt. Why do you think Wagamese would focus so much on Saul’s descriptions of the nature he is overjoyed to see once again? What is the link between Aboriginal culture and beliefs, and nature? Why is this so important concerning Saul, and this novel?

1. On page 111 Saul describes his people and a part of their identity. Find this piece, and quote it in your answer.

**Chapter 27**

None

**Chapter 28**

1. In this chapter Saul runs into an old friend. Who is it? How does it make Saul feel?

**Chapter 29**

1. Why is Sail so unwilling to play against the Kapusking Chiefs hockey team?
2. Why does his team want to play? Provide evidence for your answer.

**Chapter 30**

1. What does Saul blame for unnerving the team when they arrive in Kapuskasing?
2. Why does Wagamese write the details and happenings of the game in such detail? What effect does it have on you as he reader?
3. At the end of this chapter, Saul receives an award for his performance during the game. Why does he not want to go back on to the ice to receive it? What does he do, and how does the crowd react?

**Chapter 31**

* + - 1. What does Saul mean when he tells Virgil: “They think it’s their game.”
			2. Why does Saul become determined to getting his sense of vision faster in a game? Provid evidence with your answer?
			3. What is the significance of the way the team get treated in the café’ of the town called Chapleau? Why is this specific treatment considered to be so much worse than a mere beating for the team? What lesson/s do you think Saul learns?

**Chapter 32**

1. What does Saul start to notice everywhere?
2. How does Virgil and the team attempt to deal with the racist jokes, taunts, and threats? Is this an effective way? Explain your answer.
3. There isn’t just blatant racism that shows up in this novel, there’s also sexism. Provide some of the quotes that show up as the opposing team attempts to taunt Saul once they realize racism isn’t enough. Why do you think the team jumps to these kinds of taunts? What do you think it says about society in general?
4. How does Saul reclaim the game at the end of the chapter?

**Chapter 33**

1. What are the two things that result from the tournament? What role do they play in Saul’s life?

**Chapter 34**

1. Explain the response from Lanahan: “It’s not a perfect country… But it is a perfect game.” What could the possible meanings and predictions be related to this important line? Why does Saul doubt it?

Do you agree with it? Explain your answer.

**Chapter 35**

1. Why do you think the team pressures Saul to join the call from the scout?
2. Why is Little Chief’s description of what he’ll do to Saul in ten or fifteen years such an important part of this chapter?

**Chapter 36**

1. Do you think it is important that Virgil tells Saul he is always welcome to come back? Explain your answer.

**Chapter 37**

1. Why does Saul like mythology?
2. Who are the Sheehans? Why is their treatment of Saul so important in the book?
3. What does Saul’s flippant comment at the end of the chapter, “Skate?” I asked. “Like that, you mean?” say about his personality?

**Chapter 38**

1. Saul’s team never calls him by name, nor do they directly call him a racist name. Instead they refer to him simply as “thirteen”. What does this say about identity and being part of a group?
2. Why do you think Saul feels hurt about the players on his team being “indifferent”? Why do you think he feels this way?
3. On page 184 Sail finally engages in his first fight on the ice. What about this moment do you think makes him finally display his aggressive side in the form of a fight? What does he say happens to him concerning the joy of the game in that moment?
4. What nickname do the newspapers give Saul?

**Chapter 39**

1. This chapter is a complete interruption of the plot. Wagamese tells the story of Rebecca Wolf and her younger sister. Why would the author interrupt the story of Saul’s life to tell the reader about Rebecca? What could her experiences at St. Jerome’s symbolize in terms of what has been happening with Saul?

**Chapter 40**

1. Do you think Saul makes the right decision to return to Manitouwadge? Explain your answer.

**Chapter 41**

1. What does wonder about concerning being Ojibway? What do you think leads him to reconnect with his culture?
2. Why is the confrontation with Jorgenson important in Saul’s new life? What can you predict Saul will be like in the future?

**Chapter 42**

1. How old is Saul? Why might this information be a little shocking to the reader?
2. How does he treat the game now?

**Chapter 43**

1. Saul buys a truck and plans on roaming the country doing whatever work he can find. Do you think it’s a good idea for him to leave Manitouwadge? Explain your answer.
2. Fred Kelly says to Saul, “It will be tough, Saul… A working life is made easier by a home. People. Noise. Distraction. They fill you when you’re tired and depleted.” Do you belief that Fred’s advice is right? Explain your answer.

**Chapter 44**

1. What is the source of all the rage that Saul has burning inside of him?
2. Saul listens to classical music as he travels, and says, “Work and music sustained me for a long time.” What does this say about the power of music? Can you relate to this?
3. What does Saul say he becomes addicted over time? What finally snares him?

**Chapter 45**

1. Who does Saul meet in this chapter?
2. What does he do for Saul? Why is this important?
3. What do you predict will happen to Saul after finishing this chapter?

**Chapter 46**

1. Describe Saul’s life with Erv at the beginning of this chapter. Do you think he has finally found peace? Explain your answer.
2. Why do you think Saul cannot stop feeling anger, and cannot stop drinking?
3. If you could offer him advice in this point of the story, what would you say to him?

**Chapter 47**

1. Saul describes drinking as “drinking down”, and along the way, you lose things. List what he mentions he drinks down and away from.
2. What happens to Saul in Winnipeg?
3. Where is Saul at the end of this chapter? Did he go willingly? What made him decide to go?

**Chapter 48**

1. What does Saul do every at the centre? How does this relate to the theme of nature that been prevalent throughout the novel?
2. What and who does Saul see when he spends the night out in the wilderness? What is the significance of the things he is shown in this scene?
3. Where do you think Saul is going at the end of the chapter? Why do you think it is this specific place?

**Chapter 49**

1. Where does Saul go?
2. Describe some of the items left behind under the windows of the buildings. What does each thing possible symbolize for those who left it there?
3. What has been done to the inside of the building, and to the outbuildings?
4. What effect does this contrast of items versus destruction have on you as a reader? What message might Wagamese be trying to send about the legacy of residential schools?
5. What do we find out about Saul and Father Leboutilier in this chapter? How does Saul about it? What realization strikes him about this part of his life and his love of hockey?

**Chapter 50**

1. Where does Saul go in this chapter? Why do you think he wants to go there?
2. Do you think he will be healed spiritually and mentally from all the injustices he has suffered in his life when he arrives? Explain your answer.

**Chapter 51**

1. When he finally arrives he sees something. What does Saul see and experience?
2. Describe what Saul sees at the end of the chapter, and why it’s important that this vision is the specific one that shows up for him?

**Chapter 52**

1. Saul returns to the New Dawn Centre, explaining he needed to return, to share what he learned, and to get help. He says, “Sometimes ghosts linger. They hover in the furthest corners, and when you least expect it they lurch out, bearing everything they brought to you when you were alive. I didn’t want to be haunted.”

What are some of the “ghosts” Saul is talking about?

1. Which specific “ghost” of his life do you think would haunt Saul the most? Explain your answer.
2. When Saul returns to Fred and Martha Kelly’s house, they share with him that they has also been forced to attend residential schools as children. They talk about their own experiences trying to heal and move on as adults in life. Why is this moment so important to Saul?

**Chapter 53**

1. What has happened to the Moose hockey team Saul originally played with?
2. What do people suggest Saul should do when it comes to hockey? What does he want to do instead?

**Chapter 54**

1. What is the conversation between Saul and Virgil like when they meet at the ice rink? What does this tell you about Virgil’s character?

**Chapter 55**

1. What has Virgil not experienced? Why does his treatment and opinion of Saul change when he finds out that Saul was at St. Jerome’s?
2. What does Virgil say he would wish for? How does Saul react to this?
3. Why is it significant that Virgil invites Saul to play shinny later with the old Moose team?

**Chapter 56**

1. Describe what it’s like for Saul to be back on the ice again. Provide quotes to help explain your answer.
2. The last few lines of the novel are very important, and are layered with many possible meanings:

“How are we gonna do this?” I asked… “No, I mean with all these people. How are we gonna play the game?” He smiled and tapped my stick with his. “Together,” he said. “Like we should all along.”

Interpret the possible meaning behind this exchange between Saul and Virgil as you think about the entire novel. What message does Richard Wagamese want the reader to take from this story?