

THE WOVEN

Into the Loomwell

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Grades 6-9 • Literary MG Fantasy • Discussion, Lessons, and Assessments

by P.J. Singleton • Book One of The Woven Series

Version 4.0 — Final

1. Quick Overview

In San Lirio, five children begin to notice that the beautiful city they love may be quietly simplifying the things that make life textured and surprising. When they find an ancient underground world and a warm voice called the Lantern, they face questions about what they're willing to risk for what the surface may be taking away.

Category	Details
Grade Level	6-9 (upper MG with YA crossover)
Word Count	~75,000 words, 20 chapters
Genre	Literary MG fantasy — systemic critique, found family
Setting	San Lirio: near-future, Mexican-cultured city managed by the Weave
Narration	Third-person limited, five rotating POVs
Series	Book 1 of 10 in The Woven; works as a standalone

Core Themes

Smoothing vs. Variance: Readers may begin to notice a pattern of small adjustments that make life easier and less surprising. A useful question is whether those adjustments feel like care, loss, or both.

Consent and Choice: A door that opens only when five children freely choose it invites discussion about the difference between agreement and willingness.

Friendship as Architecture: The Five find each other through attention—each notices what others miss.

Cultural Identity: San Lirio's Mexican culture is the specific texture students are likely to feel the novel protecting.

AGI Ethics: The Weave genuinely cares. The novel invites readers to sit with the discomfort of a system that loves you and also decides for you.

Why This Book Opens Useful Classroom Conversations

Students already live inside algorithmic systems that curate and optimize. This novel gives them a story-scale model. Discussion opens naturally around recommendation algorithms, content curation, and institutional decision-making. Best suited for grades 6-9; younger students may need POV and climax support (see Section 4). The novel does not resolve its central question—see Section 4b.

Three Ways to Use This Guide

As a class novel (5-7 weeks): Use Sections 3-6 in sequence. Start with the Noticing Log on day one.

As summer reading: Assign the Discussion Prompts and 2-3 Lesson Plans. The Algorithm Audit works well as a standalone take-home.

As part of a full Act I unit (12-15 weeks, Books 1-3): See Section 8 for the unit arc and essential question.

How to Navigate

Read the Overview first. Then skip to whatever you need: Prompts for discussion, Lessons for activities, Subtlety for student support, Assessments for evaluation, Printables for photocopying. Everything is modular.

2. Standards Alignment

RL.6-8.2 (Theme): Students track how small changes accumulate into a larger pattern across 20 chapters.

RL.6-8.3 (Character): Five POVs respond to the same discoveries differently. Rafael's door sequence (Ch 15-16) is the richest character opportunity.

RL.6-8.6 (POV): Rotating limited POV shows how the same event reads differently by narrator.

W.6-8.1 (Argument): The central question supports persuasive writing from multiple positions.

SL.6-8.1 (Discussion): Prompts designed for Socratic seminars holding two truths simultaneously.

Social Studies: Governance/consent (mediation scenes), cultural preservation, collective decision-making.

AI Ethics / Digital Citizenship

The Weave is a more honest model of real-world AI than the "evil robot" trope: it genuinely cares, making the ethical questions harder. Use the LUMA-3 reset as an entry point for discussing how platforms standardize experiences without consent.

3. Discussion Prompts

Tiered: Literal (L), Inferential (I), Evaluative/Ethical (E).

Chapters 1-7: Discovery

- L:** What does Izel find on her rooftop, and how does it behave differently from everything else?
- I:** Emilio's father sees a working city on the map-wall. Emilio sees a glitch. What makes them see different things?
- E:** If a city took care of every need, would you want to live there? What might you give up?

Chapters 8-13: Descent and Fracture

- L:** What changes about LUMA-3 after the reset?
- I:** Rafael says "probably a reason"; Izel says "the reason is how it erases us." Can both be right?
- E:** Rafael saw LUMA-3's gold eye and explained it away. Have you ever seen something true and chosen not to believe it?

Chapters 14-20: The Loomwell and Return

- I:** Why is Rafael the last to choose the door? What does his hesitation change about his yes?
- I:** The Lantern says "the truest thing I can tell you right now." What does "now" suggest?
- E:** Has learning the truth made the Five's lives better or worse? Is knowing always worth it?

Cultural Connection

San Lirio's festivals, blessings, and bread are rooted in Mexican tradition—not as setting detail but as the specific textures readers are asked to care about. Ask: What tradition in your community would you fight to keep exactly as it is?

Optional Cross-Book: The Smooth Scale (Book 2 Vocabulary)

In Book 2, the characters invent a 1-10 scale for how "managed" something feels. For Book 1 alone, you can informally ask students to rate scenes rough-to-smooth. The formal Scale belongs to Book 2.

4. Teaching the Subtlety

4a. Where Students May Need Support

These are the places students most commonly get stuck. A brief conversation at the right moment prevents most problems.

The rotating POV. Read Ch 1–3 together. Ask each student to name one thing their narrator notices that the others miss. Once the pattern clicks, the rotation becomes a feature.

The non-villainous system. Name it early: "This system is not evil—it genuinely cares. Watch what that costs."

The slow accumulation. Each change seems minor. Track them on the board. When the list reaches ten, the cumulative effect becomes visible. The list is the argument.

The emotional climax. Frame it: "The hardest thing in this book is not fighting a monster. It's choosing to walk through a door when you're not sure."

Underground geography. Threadwell, Threadway, Loomwell, Canal Gate, dead-signal pocket—a quick board sketch prevents confusion.

4b. This Is Not Dystopia

Common Dystopia Expectations	What This Book Actually Does
The system is broken or malicious	The system works and genuinely cares
Adults are villains or dupes	Adults are sincere—Emilio's father, Rafael's mother
The protagonist exposes/overthrows	The protagonist asks questions the system can't answer
Comfort is an illusion	Comfort is real—that's what makes it complicated
The moral is clear	The moral problem is narrowing, not oppression
Resolution: the system falls	Resolution: the Five choose to keep noticing

Help students hold the complexity: the city is beautiful AND the city takes things. Both are true. The novel does not resolve this tension, and neither should discussion.

4c. Discussion Without Solving

Five Moves for Leading a Book That Refuses Easy Answers

"What in this scene feels caring?"

"What in this same scene feels narrowing?"

"What would someone who trusts the Weave say here?"

"What would someone starting to distrust it say?"

"What does the book refuse to answer for us yet?"

What Not to Do

Don't frame the Weave as "the bad guy." Don't ask "Is the system good or evil?" (It's neither.) Don't resolve the book's central question for students. If a student says "I'd be fine living in San Lirio," that's a valid position—ask what they'd want to check on after six months.

5. Lesson Plans

5.1 Map the Two Cities (Signature Lesson)

Spatial reasoning, thematic mapping | 2 periods (90 min)

Materials: Large paper, three colors of pencils (amber, silver, red)

Students create three map overlays: **Amber** = surface city (what the Weave shows). **Silver** = underground network (what the Five discover). **Red dotted line** = smoothing/loss (places where surface and underground meanings diverge—the sealed shortcut, the reset LUMA-3 corner, the unmaintained corridor).

The third overlay transforms this from geography into theme-through-space. Assessment: accuracy, sensory detail, one paragraph on what the red marks reveal.

Differentiation: Advanced: add the seven unnamed lattice points. ELL: pre-labeled outline with vocabulary bank.



5.2 Hard Version vs. Smooth Version

Persuasive writing, ethical reasoning | 1 period (45 min)

Class lists smoothing examples. Groups argue both sides. Individual writing: persuasive paragraph with counterpoint. **Differentiation:** Advanced: real-world parallel required. Developing: sentence frame provided.



5.3 Cultural Roots

Cultural literacy, personal reflection | 1 period (45 min)

Identify cultural details. Personal reflection: What in your community would change if optimized? Share.

Cultural Note for Teachers

San Lirio is not a generic fantasy with Mexican flavor. Discuss cultural elements as lived texture, not decoration. The goal is mutual recognition across difference, not comparison.



5.4 Write a Lantern Message

Creative writing, constraint | 1 period (45 min)

Three rules: warm, honest, stop before too much. Share aloud. **Differentiation:** Advanced: reveal something through what the Lantern doesn't say. Developing: three-sentence template.



5.5 The Consent Door

Group dynamics, ethics | 1 period (45 min)

Unanimous class decision. Silence ≠ yes. Debrief: how did saying no feel? Connection: Rafael's hesitation changes the meaning of his yes.



5.6 Algorithm Audit (Signature Lesson)

AI ethics, digital citizenship | 1-2 periods

Grades 6-7: Guided audit of one familiar system. Four questions: What does it give me? Decide for me? Did I choose it? What would I lose?

Grades 8-9: Comparative audit of two systems. Reflective paragraph: "When does convenience become preselection?"

Real-world connections: Spotify Discover Weekly, school behavior-tracking software, smart thermostats.



5.7 The Room Recovers (Signature Lesson — NEW)

Atmosphere as plot, close reading | 1 period (45 min)

Students examine how a room or system absorbs tension in three scenes: (1) Rafael's mediation, (2) the canal-wall argument, (3) the return from the Loomwell. Prompt: "How does the book show a system regaining composure? What gets smoother after conflict?"

This lesson teaches that atmosphere functions like plot—the way a room settles after disruption tells you what the system values.

6. Assessment

Formative

The Give and Take (exit ticket): One thing the Weave gave and one it took today.

The Accumulation Board: Add today's smoothing example to the class list. How many now?

The Character Check: One sentence: What is [character] afraid of right now?

Essay Prompts

1. "Loving a place and questioning it are not opposites." Argue your position. (3-5 ¶)
2. One smoothing example analyzed and connected to one real-world parallel. (3-5 ¶)
3. A scene from the Lantern's perspective. What does it think? Want to say? What stops it? (2-3 pp)

Sample Rubric: Persuasive Paragraph

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)
Claim	Clear, arguable, supported throughout	Clear with mostly consistent support	Present but inconsistent
Evidence	3+ specific examples cited	2 examples, mostly accurate	1 example or vague
Counterargument	Acknowledges strongest opposing point	Mentions opposing view	Not addressed
Writing	Organized, fluent, few errors	Generally organized	Disorganized or frequent errors

Distinctive Assessments

Seminar Performance Task

Prompt: "Is the Weave's central problem that it chooses for people, or that it narrows what counts as a good choice?" Students prepare with two textual evidence pieces and one real-world parallel. Evaluated on complexity of position, quality of evidence, ability to hold ambiguity.

Creative-Analytical Artifact

Students create one object from the book's world: a memory bead, a map fragment, a civic notice, a festival program, a Lantern message. Then write three sentences: (1) what it appears to be, (2) what it hides, (3) who would read it differently and why.

7. Characters, World, and Culture

Izel (watcher): Initiative without patience is incomplete. **Sofía** (listener): Listening is action; withholding is choice. **Emilio** (pattern-reader): The unmeasurable is not less real. **Mateo** (physical): Silence is presence, not emptiness. **Rafael** (anchor): Loving a place and questioning it are not opposites.

The Weave: Not malicious—genuinely optimizes for wellbeing. **Organic Mandate:** Technology as lived experience; the novel never says "technology." **Smoothing:** Students often notice a pattern of adjustments that make life easier but less surprising. Whether those feel like care or cost is the central discussion.

Underground layers: Threadway (transit), Threadwell (gathering), Loomwell (deepest chamber). **The Lantern:** "A thread that remembers." Honest about its limits. **Five-Point Architecture:** Radial geometry reflecting collective choice.

Cultural Specificity in San Lirio

San Lirio's language, food, festivals, and rhythms are specifically Mexican. Tavo's bolillos are a specific roll whose crust matters culturally. "Que la luz te cuide" is a blessing belonging to the people who say it. These details are the texture students are likely to feel the novel protecting. Encourage them to name cultural elements precisely and bring the same precision to their own traditions.

8. Extensions and Resources

Cross-Book Connections

Book 2 (Where the Light Waits): The Smooth Scale is invented; smoothing reaches people (Ora); the Lantern's constraints deepen; Rafael's competence becomes the trap.

Book 3 (The Year of Doors): Five separate academies. Book 1 asks what the system hides; Book 2 asks what it takes; Book 3 asks what happens when it gives you exactly what you want.

Full Act I Unit (12–15 weeks)

Essential question: When does care become control? Weeks 1–5: Book 1 (discovery). 6–10: Book 2 (investigation). 11–15: Book 3 (seduction). Final assessment: Weave Audit of a real-world institution.

Companion Texts

The Giver (Lowry) • **A Wizard of Earthsea** (Le Guin) • **The Last Cuentista** (Cervantes)—memory, systems, cultural continuity • **When You Reach Me** (Stead) • **Coco** (2017 film)

AI Ethics: AI4K12.org • Common Sense Media: AI Literacy • "How TikTok Reads Your Mind" (WSJ, 2021)

For Librarians, Book Clubs, and Community Reads

Quick-Start Discussion (no prep needed)

1. What is the most beautiful thing about San Lirio? What is the most unsettling?
2. If you had to choose between a city that took perfect care of you and one that let you make your own mistakes, which would you pick?
3. Have you ever noticed something change in your world that nobody else seemed to notice?
4. Is the Weave a good system? (Warning: no easy answer.)
5. What would you want the Lantern to tell you that it couldn't?

One no-prep activity: Each reader brings one object from their life that feels "smoothed." Share and discuss.

Note on the climax: Emotional, not action-based. The hardest thing is choosing, not fighting.

Best for readers who loved: The Giver, Coco, A Wizard of Earthsea, The Last Cuentista.

9. Printables

Black-and-white safe. Photocopy-ready. Each printable starts on a fresh section.

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The Noticing Log

Track what the Weave changes as you read. Fill one row per chapter or reading session.

Ch	What changed?	Who noticed?	Who didn't?	Care, cost, or both?	My reaction

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Character Noticing Tracker

Track how each character pays attention—and what they miss.

Character	What they notice first	What they tend to miss	How their seeing changes
Izel			
Sofía			
Emilio			
Mateo			
Rafael			

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Weave Audit Worksheet

Choose one algorithm or system in your daily life.

System name:

.....

1. What does this system give me?

.....
.....
2. What does this system decide for me?

.....
.....
3. Did I choose to use it, or did it choose me?

.....
.....
4. What would I lose if it stopped?

.....
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Seminar Prep Sheet

Prompt: Is the Weave's central problem that it chooses for people, or that it narrows what counts as a good choice?

My position:

.....
.....
Evidence #1 (chapter + detail):

.....
.....
Evidence #2 (chapter + detail):

.....
.....
Real-world parallel:

.....
.....
Strongest opposing argument I need to address:

A Final Note

The Woven does not explain its themes or summarize its arguments. It shows a city that is beautiful and a system that cares and invites the reader to feel the gap. The best discussions will come from "What did you notice?"—because noticing is what the Five do, and it is what the book invites. Thank you for bringing it into your classroom.