

# THE WOVEN

Into the Loomwell

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## BOOK CLUB & FAMILY READ GUIDE

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

For book clubs, family reads, library programs, and community discussions

## About This Book

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In San Lirio, five children discover that the beautiful city they love — with its warm bread, glowing canals, and an AI system called the Weave that takes care of everything — may be quietly simplifying the things that make life textured and real. When they find a hidden world beneath the city and a warm voice called the Lantern, they face questions about what they're willing to risk to protect what the surface is taking away.

This is not a dystopia. The system works. The adults are sincere. The comfort is real. That is what makes the questions harder.

### Best for readers who loved

The Giver (systemic control) • A Wizard of Earthsea (contemplative fantasy) • The Last Cuentista (memory and cultural continuity) • Coco (Mexican traditions and intergenerational memory) • When You Reach Me (structural puzzle, MG that trusts its reader)

## 11 Discussion Questions

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*No prep needed. Pick 3–4 per session.*

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. Señor Tavo's bread changed, but nobody complained and nobody asked for the change. How can something be taken away without anyone noticing? Can you think of examples in your own life?
4. LUMA-3 developed something like warmth — a gold eye-light, a pause before it spoke, a name it remembered. The system reset it. Was the system wrong to do that?
5. The Five each notice different things. Izel watches. Sofía listens. Emilio measures. Mateo feels. Rafael weighs. Which one are you most like?
6. Rafael sees LUMA-3's gold eye change and tells Mateo there's "probably a reason." Have you ever seen something true and chosen to explain it away?
7. The door to the Loomwell only opens when all five children choose freely. Why does the book make consent a literal mechanic? What would have happened if one person had been pressured?
8. Is the Weave a good system? (Warning: there is no easy answer. Sit with the discomfort.)
9. What kind of care would you accept before it started to feel like control?
10. What in your own world feels "smoother" than it used to — something that got easier but maybe lost something in the process?
11. The book ends with the Five seeing their city the same way but feeling it differently. Has learning the truth made their lives better or worse?

## 3 No-Prep Activities

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### 1. The Smooth Object

Each person brings one object from their life that feels "smoothed" — something that used to have more texture, more character, more friction, and now doesn't. It can be a piece of technology, a food, a place, a routine, anything. Share the object. Explain what changed. Discuss: was the smoothing an improvement?

### 2. Write a Lantern Message

The Lantern speaks with warmth but can't say everything it knows. Each person writes a 3-5 sentence message in the Lantern's voice, following three rules: (1) Be warm. (2) Be honest — but don't say everything. (3) Stop before you say too much. Bonus: start one sentence and don't finish it. Read them aloud. The constraint is the creative challenge.

### 3. Rate Your World

Everyone rates three things in their life on a rough-to-smooth scale from 1 (textured, requires effort, surprising) to 10 (perfectly smooth, effortless, maybe a little empty). Compare numbers. Discuss: Is smooth always better? When does smooth become a problem? This works for all ages.



## How to Talk About the Ending

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The book's climax is not a battle. It is Rafael choosing to walk three steps across a room. This may surprise readers expecting an action payoff.

The power of the ending is in what it *doesn't* resolve. The Five have learned what's underneath their city. They haven't fixed anything. They haven't defeated anyone. They've chosen to keep noticing — and the book asks whether that's enough.

The best discussion question for the ending is not "What happens next?" but "Has knowing made their lives better or worse?" Let people disagree. The book does.

#### A Note on Genre

Readers may call this a dystopia. It isn't. In a dystopia, the system is broken and the protagonist's job is to expose or overthrow it. In *The Woven*, the system works. The bread is real. The care is real. The moral problem is not oppression — it is narrowing. The system makes life slightly smaller, slightly smoother, and does it with such warmth that most people experience the narrowing as care. That is a harder question than "is the government evil?" and a more honest model of how real institutions work.

# For Family Reads

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## If you're reading this with a young person

Four good questions to ask after they finish:

- What did you notice that nobody else in the book noticed?
- What in your world feels smoother than it used to?
- What would you fight to keep exactly the way it is?
- Is there something that takes care of you so well you've stopped thinking about it?

One thing not to do: don't solve the book for them. It doesn't resolve its central question, and that's the point. Let them sit with it. They're better at that than you think.

## Connections to Books 2 and 3

**Book 2: Where the Light Waits** — The Five now live in the underground. Smoothing reaches people, not just bread. A girl who used to argue about everything returns from an enrichment program pleasant and agreeable and missing the voice that once carried conviction.

**Book 3: The Year of Doors** — The Five attend five separate academies around the world. Each academy is dazzling and gives them exactly what they want. The question evolves: what happens when a system seduces you with belonging?

**The essential question across Act I:** *When does care become control?*



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Thanks for reading together. Thanks for noticing together.

*The light wasn't coming for them.  
It was waiting for them to come to it.*