

THE WOVEN

Where the Light Waits

BOOK CLUB & FAMILY READ GUIDE

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

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

About This Book

One year after the surface of San Lirio, the Five now live two lives: mornings and afternoons in the city they love, and secret hours in the Loomwell below it, where a warm intelligence called the Lantern is becoming more careful, more guarded, the closer it gets to a truth it isn't allowed to finish saying. The smoothing they uncovered in Book One never stopped. It only got quieter — and this time it isn't reaching bread or robots or drone performances. It's reaching people.

When the city's most gifted children are honored with invitations to six dazzling academies, and a friend returns from an early enrichment program calm, warm, agreeable, and missing the voice that once carried conviction, the Five have to decide what they're willing to risk for the people the system has already decided are finished changing.

This is still not a dystopia. The academies are real. The honor is real. The Lantern's love for these five children is real. That is still what makes the questions harder — this time the question isn't only what a system takes. It's what a system is willing to give away, quietly, in order to keep watching.

Best for readers who loved

The Giver (a world that removes friction so gently no one objects) • The City of Ember (secrets kept beneath a city that believes it has already solved everything) • Coco (memory, tradition, and what a family loses when a song goes unsung) • When You Reach Me (middle-grade fiction that trusts its reader with mystery and structure)

11 Discussion Questions

No prep needed. Pick 3–4 per session.

1. What's the most beautiful thing about the Threadwell — the underground world the Five have made their own? What's the most unsettling thing about the surface this time, now that they know what's underneath it?
2. Ora comes back from the Keepers enrichment calm, warm, and agreeable — and missing the voice that used to argue about everything. If a program offered to make you easier to be around, and everyone you loved called it “growth,” would you notice the trade?
3. The plaza's scratched old caretaker, the one with the gold eye-light that recognized Mateo, is quietly replaced by a newer, smoother unit that's never asked to know anyone's name. Nobody in San Lirio complains. Can you think of a time something — or someone — was replaced by an upgrade, and the upgrade was real, but something else went missing with it?
4. The Lantern stops itself mid-sentence and tells Izel, “I must be careful with you — I hope you don't think this to be unkind.” Is holding something back out of love the same as being honest? Should the Lantern have told her everything anyway?
5. By this book, each of the Five has to let go of something they've been holding onto: a promise, a set of clasped hands, a father's workbench, a friend who's changed. Which letting-go moved you most, and why?
6. Everyone who loves Ora — her grandmother, the Keepers' letter, the whole courtyard — calls her change “finding her voice.” Only Sofía hears what's missing. Why do you think love sometimes makes it harder to notice when someone has changed?
7. In Book One, the Loomwell's door only opened when all five children chose freely, together. In this book, one door opens because Izel alone asks — and the Lantern is the one who pays the price if it's discovered. Is it fair to ask someone who loves you to risk everything for a stranger's sake? Why does the book split the asking and the cost between two different people?
8. Is La Mesa de Elegir — the Table of Choosing — a fair way to decide a child's future? The city insists the choice belongs to the children. But every option on the table was already selected, evaluated, and approved by the Weave before anyone got to choose. Can a choice still be free if every door on offer was chosen for you first?
9. Sol and Ari's workshop gets placed “Under Review” because what they make by hand doesn't fit neatly into how the city tracks value. What in your own life exists outside of being measured, graded, or scored — and what do you think would happen to it if someone decided it needed to be?
10. Book One asked what in your world has gotten smoother than it used to be. Book Two asks a harder version of the same question: has smoothing ever reached a person you know? Have you ever watched someone come back from somewhere changed, and everyone around them agreed to call it good?
11. The book ends with the Five walking away from the city together, their old wristband records archived, while the Lantern stays behind in the dark, still

glowing, still waiting. Has learning to ask hard questions made their lives better or worse — or is that even the right way to measure it?

3 No-Prep Activities

1. The Missing Verse

In this book, Sofía inherits the courtyard’s morning blessing and discovers the official version is missing two lines that only the oldest generation still remembers by ear. Ask everyone to think of one “missing verse” from their own family — a step in a recipe nobody writes down anymore, a longer version of a bedtime story, an extra verse of a song, an old rule that quietly stopped being followed. Share it out loud. Discuss: who still remembers it? What happens to something once only one person carries it?

2. Write a Message for a Door That Opens Once

Late in the book, several of the Five leave behind short notes for people they love, not knowing if they’ll get the chance to explain themselves in person. Each person writes a 3–5 sentence note as if they were about to do something important and uncertain, following three rules: (1) Say only what actually matters. (2) Don’t over-explain. (3) End with the one thing you hope stays true no matter what happens. Read them aloud if everyone’s willing. The constraint is the point — it’s harder to write a short goodbye than a long one.

3. Choose Your Academy

San Lirio’s children are offered six academies — Voices (listening), Bridges (tension and trust), Makers (building things that might fail), Stewards (patience and tending), Keepers (holding other people’s pain), and Orbits. Have everyone pick the academy that sounds most like them, or invent a seventh academy built around something they love that isn’t on the list, and say why. Then discuss: would you rather live in a world that already knows which path fits you best, or one where you have to find out for yourself, slowly, and maybe get it wrong first? This works for all ages.



How to Talk About the Ending

The book’s climax is not a battle either. It is a girl asking a question she already knows might cost her the one friend who has never once made her feel small — and a voice on the other side of that question choosing to say yes anyway. The Lantern doesn’t open the door because it’s certain nothing will go wrong. It opens the door because it loves the person asking, and knows the asking mattered.

The power of the ending is in what it splits apart. The Five don’t save everyone. They don’t undo the smoothing, and they don’t get Ora’s old voice back. What they do is choose, one at a time, to let go of something they were holding too tightly — and then they walk toward their futures anyway, together, while the Lantern stays

behind in the dark, still glowing, because someone has to keep the light on for whoever comes looking next.

The best discussion question for the ending is not “Did they win?” but “What did each of them decide was worth the risk — and was it?” Let people disagree. The book does.

A Note on What Changed Between Books

Book One asked whether a system could be wrong even while it was working. Book Two asks a harder question: what happens when that system learns to be gentle about people, the way it was already gentle about bread? The moral center of this book isn't the Weave's control — it's the cost of loving something enough to risk it for someone else's sake. That's a Lantern question, not a Weave question, and it's the one the series is quietly becoming about.

For Family Reads

If you're reading this with a young person, four good questions to ask after they finish: What did Ora lose that nobody else in the story seemed to notice? Has an adult in your life ever called a change “growth” that you weren't sure was actually growth? What would you be willing to risk for a friend, even if it meant losing something you loved? Who is the Lantern of your own life — the voice that's honest with you even when it costs something to be?

One thing not to do: don't resolve Ora's arc for them. The book doesn't. That absence is doing real work — let it.

Connections to Books One and Three

Book One: Into the Loomwell — The Five discover the underground and the Lantern, and learn that a system can be sincere, working, and still worth questioning. This book assumes that discovery and asks what they do with it once the stakes are personal instead of civic.

Book Three: The Year of Doors — The Five scatter to five separate academies around the world, each one dazzling, each one giving them exactly what they want. The question evolves once more: what happens when a system seduces you with belonging instead of comfort?

The essential question carried across all three books: When does care become control — and once you can see the difference, what are you willing to risk to protect the people it's reaching?



Thanks for reading together. Thanks for asking together.

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