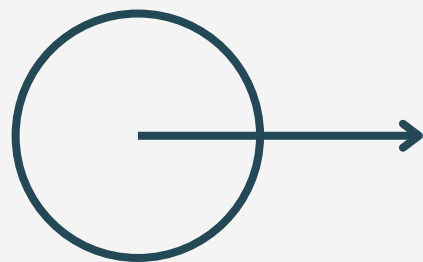




# SMUDGE EPISODE 5

## 4-7 GUIDE

Integrating SEL, ELA, and Creative Expression



# OVERVIEW

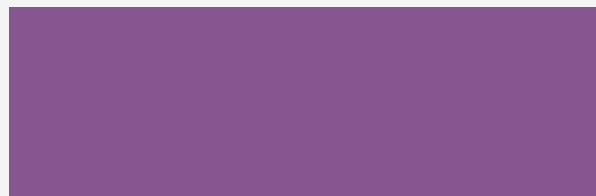


EP 5

Episode 5 delivers the most significant revelations of the series so far. The Inkompletes reach the Archive, the Weaver's domain, but find it in chaotic disrepair. After navigating a gauntlet of wild and comedic obstacles, they meet the Weaver herself, who is ancient, blunt, and clearly expects them.

In answer to their questions about why Calumbra wants their ink, the Weaver tells Calumbra's full origin story. Long ago, an author of great renown had a story accepted into the World Book. When critics began to question his work, the author, consumed by the fear of being seen as lesser, became obsessed with perfection. He began stealing fragments from other stories in the World Book, weaving them into his own, until Calumbra transformed from a single character into something altogether new: a parasite of imagination, a creature composed of many stolen stories.

When Calumbra became too powerful to contain, the Inkling Society removed the story and broke the author's pen. They believed this ended the threat. They were wrong. Calumbra survived. Now he wants to restore his story using the Inkompletes' ink as the missing pieces. If he succeeds, he will become complete, and a completed story has no place in the Unfiniverse. He will return to the world above and begin unmaking stories everywhere



The Weaver gives the Inkompletes a clue and urges them toward the Storyteller. Before she can say more, the Unraveling demands her immediate attention. The episode closes with the arrival of a mysterious, expected figure whose identity raises urgent questions about what is to come.

## Key Themes

- **The Destructive Cost of Perfectionism:** The author's fear of inadequacy and obsession with perfection set every catastrophic event in motion. He did not become a villain through cruelty. He became one through insecurity and the refusal to accept limitations.
- **The Power and Fragility of Stories:** Calumbra's ultimate goal is to unmake stories. The episode argues that stories are not entertainment. They are living things worth protecting.
- **Identity and Origins:** Calumbra did not choose what he became. He was created by someone else's obsession. This raises questions about responsibility, agency, and whether we are defined by our origins.
- **Incomplete Information and Trust:** The Weaver gives the Inkompletes what they need without giving them everything they want. Trust under incomplete information is a recurring SEL and literary theme.
- **Escalating Responsibility:** Learning the full stakes changes what is required of the characters and invites students to consider how awareness of a bigger problem changes their obligations.

# LEARNING PATHS

With this guide's resources, teachers can focus on three paths to maximize engagement with Episode 5:



1

## ELA

- Analyze complex villain origins and narrative structure
- Practice claim-evidence-reasoning writing
- Examine symbolism and thematic development
- Develop argumentative and creative writing skills across multiple genres

2

## SEL

- Explore perfectionism, criticism, and the difference between healthy striving and destructive obsession
- Revisit empathy vs. excusing with deeper evidence
- Examine trust and the limits of information
- Connect the episode's themes to students' own experiences

3

## Creative Expression

- Write perspective pieces, origin stories, missing scenes, and world-building texts
- Practice analytical essays that move beyond summary to genuine thematic argument



# PRE-WATCH DISCUSSION

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Use these as brief partner discussions or written quick-writes before the episode. They activate prior knowledge and prime students to notice key moments.

## Prompts:

- Think about a time someone criticized something you made or said. How did you react? What do you think is the healthiest way to respond to criticism?
- Is there a difference between wanting to get better at something and being obsessed with perfection? Where is the line between the two?
- In Episode 4, we learned Calumbra was erased from the World Book and wants to restore himself. Based on what you know, why do you think he needs the Inkompletes specifically? What does their ink represent?
- In this episode, we will hear Calumbra's full origin story. As you watch, pay attention to the moment where you think he, or the author who created him, could have made a different choice. What was it?



# DURING-WATCH DISCUSSION

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These are pause points for brief discussion or note-taking. Choose based on your class's pacing needs.

## Prompts:

- Pause at the opening exchange with Smudge's author Edgar discussing Smudge with Wendell. Edgar says 'I just worry.' What could they be worried about?
- Pause when the Weaver says Calumbra became 'a parasite of imagination itself' and ask: What does a parasite do? Why does calling Calumbra a 'parasite of imagination' tell us something specific and serious about his nature?
- Pause when the Weaver says a finished story has no place in the Unfiniverse and ask: Why would that be the rule? What does it suggest about the nature of the Unfiniverse and why unfinished stories belong here?
- Pause at the mysterious arrival and ask: The figure says 'I was beginning to think you weren't going to show.' What does that line tell us? Does it suggest they are a friend, an enemy, or something more complicated?



# POST-WATCH DISCUSSION

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AFTER

These prompts work well as Socratic seminar questions, small-group discussions, or written quick-responses.

## Prompts:

- The author who created Calumbra was not trying to be a villain. He was afraid of being seen as not good enough. Does that change how you see what he did? Can someone cause enormous harm without being deliberately evil?
- The Weaver says the Inking Society 'underestimated' Calumbra. Is there a lesson there beyond the story: what happens when people assume a problem has been solved and stop paying attention?
- Both Smudge and Calumbra are incomplete in different ways. Smudge is an Inkomplete by nature. Calumbra was made incomplete by force and wants to be restored. How does each of them relate to their incompleteness? What does that difference say about them as characters?
- The episode opens with two voices watching from above, one of them saying 'I just worry.' Who do you think they are, and why might the show choose to open the episode this way?



# CHARACTER PROFILES



- **Smudge:** A brave Inkomplete navigating an increasingly dangerous mission. In Episode 5, Smudge must absorb the full weight of what is at stake: not just their own story, but all stories everywhere. Smudge's identity as an Inkomplete, once a source of insecurity, is now central to the mission's hope.
- **The Weaver (Arachnotherum Giganticus):** Ancient, powerful, and abrupt. She does not have time for pleasantries and says so. She is the keeper of the Archive, a living tapestry of unfinished stories. The Weaver sees all threats because all threats pass through her loom. She is clearly on the side of stories and against Calumbra, but she is not warm. Her bluntness and the partial information she provides make her a complex ally.
- **Fleck:** The group's pragmatic leader. Her response to the Weaver's slow exposition, 'We don't have time for bedtime stories. We need answers,' captures her voice perfectly. She is protective, action-oriented, and occasionally impatient with complexity.
- **Dot:** Thoughtful, knowledgeable, and calm under pressure. Her musical ability and knowledge of the Unfiniverse continue to make her a crucial asset.

**(continued)**

# CHARACTER PROFILES



- **Spinks:** Comic relief with genuine heart. His humor during high-stress situations is a coping mechanism that also keeps the group's spirits from collapsing. His line about a 'fan club' in the Archive's chaos is character-perfect.

- **Calumbra:** Now fully rendered as a tragic and dangerous villain. He did not begin as a creature of malice. He was made by an author's obsession, punished for it, and then became something far more dangerous than anyone anticipated. Understanding his origin does not excuse his actions but makes him one of the more complex antagonists in the series.



# PLOT BREAKDOWN



## **Introduction:**

The episode opens above the main narrative, with Smudge's author Edgar discussing Smudge with Wendell. Edgar says 'I just worry.' This sets a tone of urgency and concern. Wendell notes that they could not have known Smudge would endure. There is an ominous acknowledgment that Calumbra's power is rising. This framing device positions the audience outside the story, watching alongside these authors who may have more knowledge than they are sharing.

## **Rising Action**

The Inkompletes arrive at the Archive. It looks abandoned and deteriorating, a reflection of the Unraveling Calumbra has set in motion. As they move through it, the Archive becomes increasingly chaotic, with possessed pages, strange traps, and fire. The chaos results in Spinks losing his pants and Dot losing her scarf. Stitch helps the group navigate. Their humor and teamwork carry them through.

**(continued)**

# PLOT BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)



## **Climax**

The Weaver greets them with a dry 'You're late.' When the Inkompletes explain what has happened, specifically that Calumbra has taken Iggy and they need to know why he wants their ink, the Weaver tells Calumbra's full origin story in the manner of a fable: 'Once upon a time, an author of great renown...' The author's obsession with perfection, his theft from other stories, Calumbra's transformation into a parasite of imagination, and the Inkling Society's response are all laid out with clarity and weight. The revelation is complete: Calumbra wants the Inkompletes' essence to finish his story. If he succeeds, a finished story cannot remain in the Unfiniverse. He will return to the world above and unmake every story in his path.

## **Falling Action**

The Weaver gives the Inkompletes a physical clue that will lead them to the Storyteller. She urges them to go immediately. She acknowledges the Storyteller is 'a form of him,' the original author perhaps in some changed state. Before she can elaborate, the Unraveling demands her attention.

## **Resolution**

Hocus appears at the end. They say 'I was beginning to think you weren't going to show,' suggesting this meeting was expected. The episode ends here, leaving the audience in urgent anticipation.

# GRADE 4-7 RESOURCES



## Activity 1: Comprehension Questions

*Focus: ELA, Understanding What Happened*

Scale your expectations by grade. Grades 4-5 should focus on accurate recall and basic inference. Grades 6-7 should be expected to support all inferences with specific evidence. Use think-pair-share before independent writing for the most complex questions. There is no single correct answer for what the mysterious figure's arrival means. Look for reasoning, not a specific conclusion.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

**Directions:** Answer each question using complete sentences. Use evidence from the episode to support your answers.

- 1 What does the Weaver say the Archive was built to do? Use her exact words if you remember them.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Describe Calumbra's full origin story as told by the Weaver. Include: what the author was like, what he did, what happened to Calumbra, and what the Inklings Society did about it.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 The Weaver calls Calumbra 'a parasite of imagination itself.' What does a parasite do? Why is this description specific and serious?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 What will happen if Calumbra finishes his manuscript and becomes complete? Why is that a danger to the world above?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Why does the Weaver tell the Inkompletes to go 'quickly now'? What interrupts her?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 The episode opens with two unknown voices. What do they say? Who do you think they are? What evidence supports your theory?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Who arrives at the very end of the episode? What does their first line tell us about whether they are expected?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8 **BONUS:** Based on everything in this episode, what do you think Calumbra's ultimate goal is beyond just becoming complete? Support your answer with at least two details.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Activity 2: Claim and Evidence

*Focus: ELA, Using Evidence to Support Ideas*

Before students begin, briefly review the difference between evidence (what specifically happened or was said) and explanation (why it supports the claim). A common mistake at this grade level is writing general references rather than specific moments. Model with one example on the board, then release to students.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### CLAIM AND EVIDENCE

**Directions:** Good analysts support their ideas with specific evidence. For each claim below, find specific evidence from the episode. Then write a fourth claim of your own.

**Claim 1:** Calumbra's origin makes him a tragic villain, one we can understand even if we do not agree with his actions.  
*Evidence from the episode:*

\_\_\_\_\_

**Claim 2:** The stakes in Episode 5 are higher than in Episode 4.  
*Evidence from the episode:*

\_\_\_\_\_

**Claim 3:** The Weaver is on the Inkompletes' side, even though she seems cold and abrupt.  
*Evidence from the episode:*


\_\_\_\_\_

**Your own claim:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence that supports your claim:**

\_\_\_\_\_



# Activity 3: Calumbra's Origin Story: Story Structure Analysis

*Focus: ELA, Narrative Structure*

The Weaver tells this story within the main story, making it a nested narrative, a story within a story. Point this out explicitly for grades 6-7. Ask: Why might the writers have chosen to deliver Calumbra's origin through the Weaver's retelling rather than showing it directly? For grades 4 and 5, focus on the structure map without the meta-narrative layer.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### CALUMBRA'S ORIGIN STORY: STORY STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

**Directions:** The Weaver tells Calumbra's backstory as a 'once upon a time' story inside the main story. Map it onto the narrative arc below.

**Exposition**  
Who was the author?  
What was his life like?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Conflict**  
What problem arose? What did the author fear?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Rising Action:**  
What choices did the author make? How did Calumbra change?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Climax:**  
What happened when Calumbra became too powerful?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Consequence:**  
What resulted? How does this connect to what is happening now?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Reflection:**  
This is a 'story within a story' (a nested narrative). Why might the writers have chosen to tell Calumbra's origin through the Weaver's retelling rather than showing it directly?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Activity 4: Vocabulary in Context in Context


*Focus: ELA, Word Knowledge*

Before students work independently, do a quick class read-through of the relevant transcript lines. Model context-clue thinking aloud for one word, then have students work in pairs before writing independently.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

**Directions:** Use context clues from the episode to define each word. Then use it in your own sentence that shows you understand the meaning.



**1. unravel**  
From the episode: *'But now, thanks to him, it unravels before my very eyes.'*  
My definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
My sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. parasite**  
From the episode: *'A creature not of one story, but many. A parasite of imagination itself.'*  
My definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
My sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. essence**  
From the episode: *'Your essence is the key.'*  
My definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
My sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity 5: Symbolism Tracker Tracker

*Focus: ELA, Figurative Language and Meaning*

This activity works best after a brief class review of what symbolism means. It is not just that something represents something else, but that the author made a specific choice to use that image because it carries resonance beyond its literal meaning. The broken pen is particularly rich. What does it mean to break a writer's tool? Guide without giving answers. Let students construct the meaning.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

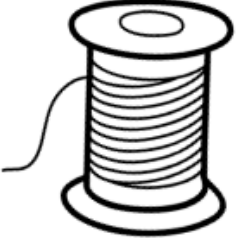
### SYMBOLISM TRACKER

**Directions:** A symbol is an object or image that represents something beyond its literal meaning. Analyze three symbols from the episode below.

**Symbol 1: The Weaver's Loom and Tapestry**  
The Weaver weaves a tapestry made of unfinished stories. What does weaving represent? What does a tapestry of stories say about how narratives are connected?

**What this symbol represents:** \_\_\_\_\_


**Why the writers chose this specific image:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Symbol 2: The Broken Pen**  
The Inklings Society broke the author's pen to stop him. What does a pen represent for a writer? What were they really doing when they broke it?

**What this symbol represents:** \_\_\_\_\_


**Why the writers chose this specific image:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Symbol 3: The Archive Unraveling**  
The Archive, a place of order and meaning, is falling apart because of Calumbra. What real-world idea might this represent?

**What this symbol represents:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why the writers chose this specific image:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Activity 6: Conflict Analysis Analysis

### Focus: ELA, Types of Conflict

Remind students that a story can have multiple conflicts operating simultaneously, and that the most important conflict may not be the most visible one. For grades 6 and 7, push students to consider which conflict is primary and which are secondary, and to defend that position. The most interesting argument is for Character vs. Self as the primary conflict, because the author's internal collapse is what set all external events in motion.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### CONFLICT ANALYSIS

**Directions:** Stories often have multiple conflicts operating at the same time. Identify and analyze each type of conflict in this episode.

**CHARACTER VS. CHARACTER**

Who is in conflict and what are they fighting over?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CHARACTER VS. SELF**

Which character has an internal conflict? What is their internal struggle?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CHARACTER VS. SOCIETY**

How do characters conflict with a system or institution in this episode? Think about both the Inkompates and the author.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_


**Which conflict do you think is the MAIN conflict of this episode? Defend your choice with evidence.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Activity 7: The Danger of Perfectionism


*Focus: SEL, Healthy vs. Destructive Striving*

Approach this discussion with care. Some students may have significant personal experience with perfectionism or anxiety about performance. Keep the initial conversation anchored to the character before inviting personal reflection. Useful framing: 'The author shows us one extreme: what happens when the fear of not being good enough takes over completely. Most of us experience smaller versions of that fear. What are some healthy strategies for dealing with it?'

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### THE DANGER OF PERFECTIONISM

**Directions:** The author who created Calumbra destroyed everything because he could not handle criticism and became obsessed with being perfect. Explore the difference between healthy growth and destructive perfectionism.



In your own words, describe what the author did and what drove him to it:



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the difference between wanting to improve at something and being destructively obsessed with perfection?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

 HEALTHY: Wanting to Grow	 DESTRUCTIVE: Obsessed with Perfection
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Have you ever felt pressure to be perfect at something? What was healthy about it, and what was unhealthy?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Activity 8: Understanding vs. Excusing: Round 2

*Focus: SEL, Empathy Without Approval*

Students encountered this distinction in Episode 4 regarding Calumbra. Now they are being asked to apply it to Calumbra's origin: the author who created him. Push back gently when students want to excuse the author because they understand his pain: 'Understanding explains the choice. Does it make the harm to others acceptable?' The goal is a clear distinction between the two concepts.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### UNDERSTANDING VS. EXCUSING: ROUND 2

**Directions:** In Episode 4, you thought about whether understanding Calumbra means excusing him. Now you know his origin story. Apply that same thinking to the author who created him.

Briefly describe what happened to the author and why he made the choices he did:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does knowing the full story change how you feel about the author? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the difference between understanding someone's pain and excusing the harm they caused?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Both the author AND Calumbra caused harm. How is each one's situation different? Who, if anyone, is most responsible?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Activity 9: Trusting the Weaver the Weaver

*Focus: SEL, Critical Thinking About Trust*

Encourage students to think about what evidence of trustworthiness actually looks like, not just 'she seems nice' but specific observable behaviors. The Weaver is deliberately written as cold and abrupt, which challenges the assumption that trustworthy people are warm and friendly. That friction is worth exploring.


Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### TRUSTING THE WEAVER

**Directions:** The Weaver tells the Inkompletes what they need to know and sends them off without explaining everything. Think critically about what makes someone, or something, trustworthy.

List three things the Weaver did or said in this episode that suggest she IS trustworthy:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_



List one thing that might make you question whether the Weaver is fully trustworthy:

\_\_\_\_\_

The Weaver is cold, abrupt, and does not explain everything. Does that mean she cannot be trusted? What is the difference between being warm and being trustworthy?

\_\_\_\_\_

Think of a time you had to trust someone without full information. What made you decide whether to trust them or not?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Activity 10: Why Stories Matter

*Focus: SEL, Personal Connection to the Episode's Stakes*

Before students write, consider doing a two-minute quick-write on the board together: what would actually be lost if stories disappeared? Guide students past the obvious (entertainment) toward deeper ideas: empathy, the ability to live other lives, the processing of difficult emotions, cultural memory, the transmission of values.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### WHY STORIES MATTER

**Directions:** The episode's central stakes are the destruction of all stories. This is the most serious threat of the series. Think carefully about what that would mean.

**What would the world actually lose if all stories disappeared? Go beyond the obvious. Think about empathy, identity, cultural memory, and values.**

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**What story has mattered most in your life? It could be a book, film, show, or game. Why did it matter?**

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**The Weaver says the Archive was built to 'weave meaning from chaos.' What does that phrase mean to you? How do stories create meaning?**

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# Activity 11: Argumentative Writing Writing: Who Is Most Responsible?

*Focus: ELA, Argumentative Writing*

All three positions are defensible with evidence: the author, the Inkling Society, and Calumbra. Make that clear before students begin. Look for: a specific arguable claim, at least three pieces of evidence, acknowledgment of the strongest counterargument, a response to that counterargument, and a conclusion that synthesizes rather than simply repeats.


Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING: WHO IS MOST RESPONSIBLE?

**Directions:** The episode's central stakes are the destruction of all stories. This is the most serious threat of the series. Think carefully about what that would mean.

**Step 1:** Choose your position (circle one):

THE AUTHOR is most responsible      THE INKLING SOCIETY is most responsible      CALUMBRA is most responsible




**Step 2:** Write your claim (a clear, arguable statement of your position):

\_\_\_\_\_

**Step 3:** List your three strongest pieces of evidence:

- 1
- 2
- 3



**Step 4:** What is the strongest argument AGAINST your position? (counterargument)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Step 5:** How do you respond to that counterargument?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Step 6:** Write your conclusion. Restate your claim in a new way and explain why it matters.

\_\_\_\_\_

# Activity 12: Character Motivation Map

## Motivation Map: The Author

*Focus: ELA and SEL, Character Analysis*

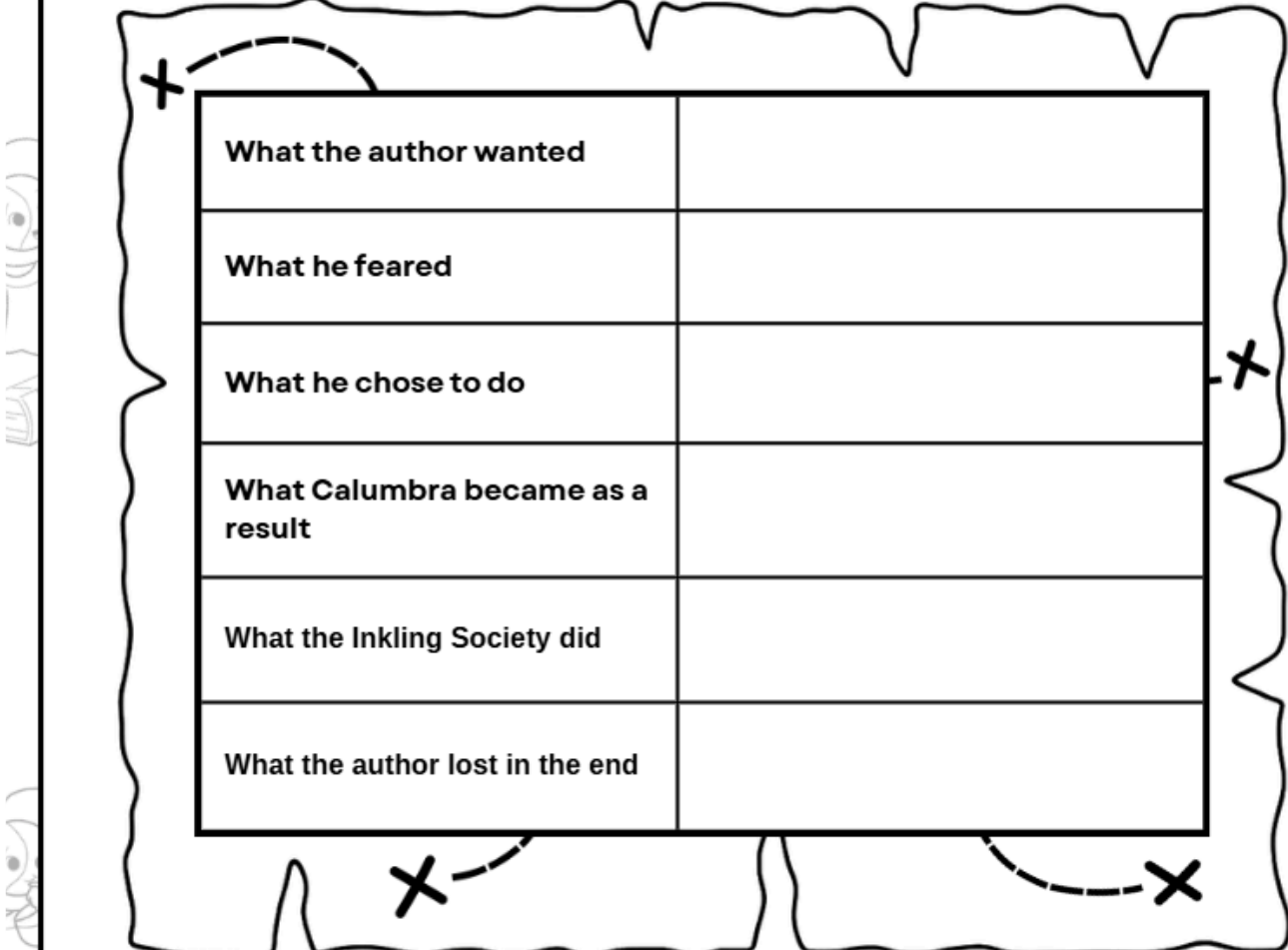
This activity focuses on the author as a character, a human being who made choices, unlike Calumbra who was created. The most important question at the end of this map is: 'At what point could he have made a different choice?' There are multiple defensible answers and all should be accepted if supported with reasoning.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### CHARACTER MOTIVATION MAP: THE AUTHOR

**Directions:** Map the author's arc from the Weaver's story. Then answer the reflection question at the end.

What the author wanted	
What he feared	
What he chose to do	
What Calumbra became as a result	
What the Inklings Society did	
What the author lost in the end	



At what point in the author's story could he have made a different choice? What was that moment, and what could he have done instead?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Activity 13: Two Voices: Who Is Watching?


*Focus: ELA, Inference and Point of View*

This is an inference and literary analysis activity. Push students to ground their theories in evidence: tone of voice, specific word choices, and narrative function. For grades 6-7, connect this to point of view and narrative frame as literary concepts.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### TWO VOICES: WHO IS WATCHING?

**Directions:** The episode opens with two unknown voices discussing Smudge and Calumbra from somewhere outside the main story. Analyze what we can learn from this scene.



What do the two voices say? Write what you remember of the dialogue:

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What specific words or phrases suggest these characters know Smudge? What does their language reveal about their feelings toward Smudge?

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Who do you think these characters are? Develop a theory and support it with at least two pieces of evidence from the scene or episode:

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Why might the writers have chosen to open this episode with characters watching from outside the story? What effect does it have on the audience?

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## Activity 14: Theme Essay Essay

### Focus: ELA, Thematic Analysis and Essay Writing

For grades 4-5, the essay can be three to four paragraphs with one claim, two or three supporting points, and a conclusion. For grades 6-7, expect a full five-paragraph structure. Enforce the key distinction: analysis is not summary. Students should be asking 'what does this mean and why does it matter?' not just 'what happened?'


Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### THEME ESSAY PLANNING

**Directions:** Analyze how one theme develops through Episode 5 (and optionally Episode 4). Choose your theme, plan your essay, and write it on separate paper or in the space below.

**Step 1: Choose your theme (circle one):**

- The cost of perfectionism
- The power and fragility of stories
- Sacrifice and friendship
- Identity under pressure




**Step 2: Write your thesis (a specific, arguable claim about how this theme is developed):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Step 3: List three specific examples from the episode(s) that develop this theme:**

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_



**Step 4: For each example, what does it MEAN? (Analysis, not just summary)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Step 5: What is the larger relevance of this theme? Why does it matter beyond just this story?**

\_\_\_\_\_

# Activity 15: Writing Choice Board Choice Board

## Focus: Creative and Analytical Writing

Let students choose their own prompt. Choice is a strong motivational lever. Set clear expectations before students begin: minimum length, due date, and the expectation of a drafting and revision process. For any prompt, remind students that strong writing means staying true to the established characters and world rules. Celebrate finished work through readings, displays, or a class publication.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### WRITING CHOICE BOARD

**Directions:** Choose ONE writing prompt from the board below. Write on a separate piece of paper or digitally. Each piece should be at least 500 words. Use strong writing techniques: specific details, character voice, and precise language.

<b>Draw and Label</b> Retell the scene where the Weaver reveals Calumbra's origin story from Calumbra's point of view. What is he feeling as he learns they know his secret? What does he plan to do next?	<b>Missing Scene</b> Write the scene that happened AFTER the episode ends. The mysterious figure has just arrived. What do they say? What do they want? Write 400-600 words maintaining character voice and world rules.	<b>Character Analysis Essay</b> Write an analytical essay examining the Weaver's character. Is she trustworthy? What are her motivations? Support your analysis with specific evidence from the episode.
<b>Psychological Thriller</b> Expand the Weaver's retelling of Calumbra's origin story into a full short story. Show the author's descent into obsession. Build suspense through pacing, word choice, and atmosphere.	<b>World-Building Article</b> Write an informational article for new visitors to the Unfiniverse about the Archive. Describe its history, purpose, how it works, dangers, and current state. Use descriptive language and organize with headers.	<b>Dialogue-Driven Scene</b> Write a conversation between Smudge and one of the two unknown voices from the opening. How did they find each other? What does the voice know? What do they choose to share or withhold?
<b>Backstory Narrative</b> Write the full story of how the Archive was built. Who built it? Why? What was the original plan? How did the Weaver come to guard it? Maintain consistency with what we know from the episode.	<b>Sequel Episode</b> Write the opening scene of Episode 6. The Inkompletes have met the mysterious figure. Introduce a new conflict, develop character relationships, and end on a moment of tension or surprise.	<b>Thematic Essay</b> Analyze the theme of 'the danger of perfectionism' across Episodes 4 and 5. How is it developed? What message does it convey? Support your argument with specific evidence and explain its real-world relevance.

I chose this prompt: \_\_\_\_\_

Before you write, plan here:

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## STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

- **ELA: Reading Literature (Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas); Writing (Argumentative, Informational, and Narrative); Speaking and Listening; Language (Vocabulary Acquisition and Use).**
- **SEL: Self-awareness; Social awareness; Responsible decision-making; Relationship skills (CASEL framework).**
- **Critical Thinking: Evidence-based reasoning, perspective-taking, inference and analysis.**

