

WHAT'S SO COOL ABOUT LUCHA LIBRE?

A BORDERPUNK RPG BY SIMON MOODY



CRÉDITOS

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This game is based on **What's So Cool About Outer Space?** by Jared Sinclair. Some of that text is reused here, unaltered. This game borrows ideas and influence from **What's So Cool About Mighty Thews?** by Nicholas Masyk and **Pilot's Light** by Kevin Thien Vu Long Nguyen. Created as part of the **What's So Cool About Jam**, August 2020.

Inspired by **Lucha Underground**, **Guacamelee**, *las películas de El Santo*, y *un poquito de Streets of Rage*.

This game was written on stolen Massachusetts land. It is dedicated to everyone in the Mexican-American diaspora. We didn't cross the border; the border crossed us.

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¡EMPIEZA AQUÍ!

You are a *técnico*, a wrestler who fights for the common folk. As an honorable *luchador*, you wear an iconic mask and fight evil wherever it arises. It is your sworn duty to oppose any *rudo* who serves evil causes. As a *luchador* you're equal parts wrestler and superhero. Sometimes you wrestle *rudos* in the ring; sometimes you wrestle vampires in Hell or aliens in outer space. How? That mask you wear *es mágica*. It gives you special powers and lets you see beyond *El Mundo Viviente*, the world we live in, to perceive *El Mundo Espiritual* - the world of spirits, monsters, and gods.

MÉXICO
MI AMOR

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Throughout this document you'll see a lot of words in Spanish. The text bounces back and forth between English and Spanish, *a veces* within the same sentence. For many bilingual and multicultural people, this flow between the languages they speak is natural.

Si no hablas Español, no te preocupes - you can probably figure out what something means in context. If you find this alienating, consider how it feels to be marginalized. Then, if you're still confused, you can use Google Translate or start Duolingo lessons.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

- Yourself and 2 to 4 friends.
- A place to play where you can talk and roll dice without being bothered or bothering other people.
- Two six-sided dice (d6) and one four-sided die (d4) per player.
- Snacks and drinks for everyone if you're playing in person.
- Some pencils and scrap paper, or something to write with/on.

One of you is the ANNOUNCER. The ANNOUNCER frames the action by narrating what mundane or supernatural threats are causing problems for others.

The rest of you are *LUCHADORES*. You respond to the scenarios and challenges posed to you by the ANNOUNCER. Sometimes you'll roll dice to find out what happens in your fight against evil.

The ANNOUNCER makes final calls about rules or disagreements, but it's also their job to listen to the *LUCHADORES* and be fair.

HOW TO PLAY SAFELY

Safety tools are ways to make sure that everyone at the table feels safe and comfortable, both in and out of game. Use the ones that work for you and your group, but you must use them to play this game. If you'd like to learn more, explore the options in the *TTRPG Safety Toolkit*, compiled by Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk. Find it at: bit.ly/ttrpgsafetytoolkit.

"AHORA, ENTRANDO A LA ARENA..."

1. Choose a HEROIC name that describes who you are and what you believe in!
2. Choose whatever pronouns you want for yourself. *Si eres masculino*, you're probably a *luchador*. *Si eres femenina*, you're probably a *luchadora*. *Si eres un otro género*, you might be a *luchadore*. Spanish is a gendered language so it doesn't play nicely with gender-neutrality or gender-fluidity. Call yourself whatever makes you feel comfortable!
3. You always wear your MASK - it identifies, defines, and empowers you. Describe it! A mask always has TWO COLORS, a THEME, and one or more interesting DETAILS. Roll on these tables or make up your own!



COLOR (2D6) THEME (1D6) DETAILS (1+D6)

1 - Gold	1 - Floral	1 - Sequins or Gems
2 - Blue	2 - Skeletal	2 - Horns
3 - White	3 - Elemental	3 - Stars
4 - Red	4 - Religious	4 - Glitter
5 - Green	5 - Animalistic	5 - Hood or Cowl
6 - Black	6 - Comical	6 - Fur or Hair

4. You fight for justice but there's one CAUSE you believe in above all others. Either roll 2d6 on the table below, choose an option, or make up your own!

WHAT FIRE BURNS IN YOUR HEART?

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2 - "I fight to save the world from the apocalyptic future I came from." | 8 - "I fight against human trafficking." |
| 3 - "I fight to bring joy where there is none." | 9 - "I fight to protect the environment." |
| 4 - "I fight to bring knowledge to everyone." | 10 - "I fight for marginalized genders' rights." |
| 5 - "I fight for the poor and the downtrodden." | 11 - "I fight to protect my people's heritage." |
| 6 - "I fight monsters who prey on innocents." | 12 - "I fight for a higher power: <i>Dios</i> Himself or one of the old gods." |
| 7 - "I fight every criminal that <i>la policia</i> won't." | <i>Dobles</i> - "I fight to atone for my evil past." |



5. You have a SIGNATURE STYLE of wrestling that emphasizes certain kinds of moves over others. How do you fight your foes? Describe your style!

THROWS!

PURE STRENGTH!

MARTIAL ARTS!

GRAPPLES!

HIGH-FLYING MOVES!

¡OTRO ESTILO!!

6. You have skills and assets that help you seek justice. Choose TWO TRAITS; they might help in the ring, but they help more outside it. *Por ejemplo:*

STUNNING ATHLETICISM!

HIGH-OCTANE DRIVING!

SUPERNATURAL LORE!

INSPIRING PRESENCE!

ELEMENTAL MANIPULATION!

¡OTRO RASGO CHIDO!

7. You can take 3 FALLS. Grab a d4 and set it to 4 - you are *EN FUEGO*. Don't worry about what these mean right now; you'll learn about them as you play.

¡Estás lista para jugar!





WRESTLING Y MÁS

WHEN YOU ATTEMPT TO DO
SOMETHING RISKY OR DANGEROUS
WHERE THE OUTCOME IS UNCERTAIN:

Tell everyone what you're trying to do and how you're doing it. Then, roll the dice!

+1 FOR EACH ADVANTAGE YOU HAVE, CÓMO:

- An advantageous POSITION!
- Diving off the top rope (or similar)!
- A relevant TRAIT or item!
- Using your SIGNATURE STYLE!
- An action that helps your CAUSE!
- ¡Otra cosa buena!

-1 FOR EACH DISADVANTAGE YOU HAVE, CÓMO:

- An exposed POSITION!
- Your TRAITS cause problems for you!
- Your SIGNATURE STYLE is countered!
- You're injured or physically impeded!
- An action that hurts your CAUSE!
- ¡Otra cosa mala!

Before you roll dice, the ANNOUNCER will tell you how difficult the challenge is.

6 - FÁCIL

8 - NORMAL

10 - DIFÍCIL

12 - ÉPICO

If your total roll is equal to or greater than the difficulty, you succeed! You do what you said you'd do, in the way that you wanted to do it. If your total roll is lower than the difficulty, you fail. The ANNOUNCER tells you if you either don't do what you attempted, do it but at great cost, or offers you a hard bargain.

Either way, the ANNOUNCER will tell you what happens next.

ON A SUCCESS...

- Inflict 1 FALL on an enemy (or more, if it's an especially powerful attack)!
- Gain a temporary Advantage!
- Overcome a challenge (or make a step of progress if it's time-consuming)!
- ¡Otra cosa buena!

ON A FAILURE...

- Suffer 1 FALL from an enemy or hazard (or more, if it's especially dangerous)!
- Gain a temporary Disadvantage!
- Discover an unpleasant truth!
- An enemy learns how to counter your SIGNATURE STYLE!
- ¡Otra cosa mala!

EL SUPER ATAQUE

When you are *EN FUEGO*, you can activate your *SUPER ATAQUE*: a brief but devastating display of superheroic power! When you use it, you don't roll the dice. Instead, tell everyone how cool it looks! You can use a *SUPER ATAQUE* to do any one of these things:

DEFEAT ALL NEARBY MINIONS!

INFLICT 1 FALL ON AN ENFORCER OR BOSS!

DESTROY AN OBSTACLE OR BOSS WARD!

¡OTRA COSA IMPRESIONANTE!



COMO REAVIVAR TU FUEGO

After you use a *SUPER ATAQUE*, put your d4 away for now; you're no longer *EN FUEGO*. To charge up again, either take an action that advances your *CAUSE*, do something that makes everyone at the table say "That's so cool!", or take a *FALL* without trying to resist the consequences. If you do any of those things when not *EN FUEGO*, take your d4 back and set it to 1. When you do one of those things again, the d4 goes up. When it's at 4, you're ¡*EN FUEGO una vez más!*

TAKING A FALL

When you suffer injury, get pinned, have your heart broken, lose faith in yourself or your CAUSE briefly, or something else really bad happens to you, you TAKE A FALL. You can take 3 FALLS and recover all lost FALLS in between play sessions.

When you take your last FALL, you don't die; you become *FANTASMAL* instead.

THE POWER OF HEART

If a nearby ally is *EN FUEGO* when you take your last FALL, they can spend their *SUPER ATAQUE* to stop you from becoming *FANTASMAL* and heal you!

To do so, your ally must give a brief, inspiring and honest speech about why they need your help. If you - the player - accept their words, immediately reset to 3 FALLS and become *EN FUEGO* yourself!

HELPING OTHERS UP

When you administer first aid, use healing magics, or give words of support and encouragement to another *LUCHADOR* who isn't *FANTASMAL*, you can restore 1 of their lost FALLS. This only works in *El Mundo Viviente*. When you're in *El Mundo Espiritual*, you'll need stronger *hechizos*!



EL MUNDO ESPIRITUAL

Your MASK binds you between two worlds; if you would ever die, you become *FANTASMAL* instead as your spirit departs your body. You can also choose to become *FANTASMAL* by stepping sideways into *El Mundo Espiritual*.

CUANDO ESTÁS FANTASMAL, TÚ PUEDES...

- See and physically interact with spirits or anything native to *El Mundo Espiritual*.
- Perceive anything supernatural as it truly is, piercing any glamours or disguises it has.
- Petition a supernatural being for a favor.
- Return to *El Mundo Viviente* whenever you want, if you chose to become *FANTASMAL*.
- Travel freely within *El Mundo Espiritual*, but only to the edge of the first level of *Mictlān*.

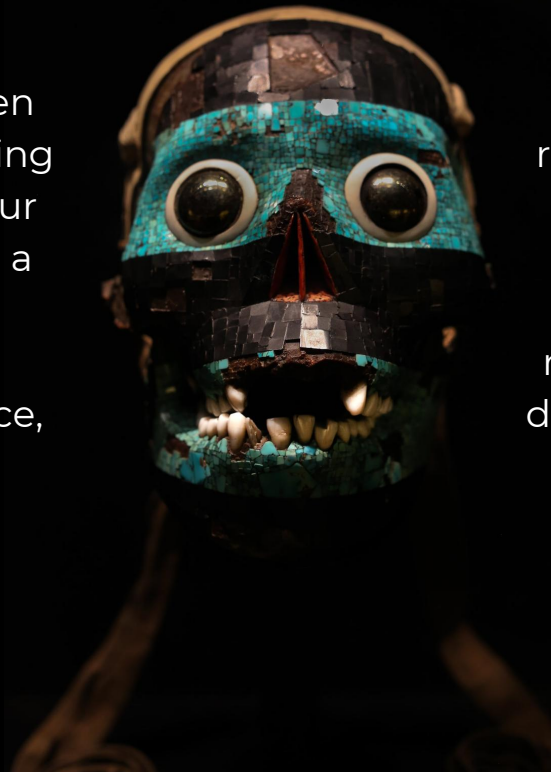
...PERO NO TÚ PUEDES...

- Be seen by or physically interact with anything mundane in *El Mundo Viviente*.
- Conceal your true identity as a mortal.
- Refuse supernatural beings' calls for aid.
- Return to *El Mundo Viviente* after dying until you bargain for your soul with, or prove your worth to, a spirit or a god.
- Refuse the god *Xolotl* when he comes to guide you on the 4-year journey to the ninth level of *Mictlān*.

RESURRECCIÓN

When you die and become *FANTASMAL*, you can only return to *El Mundo Viviente* by proving your worth to a powerful spirit or a god. When you ask them for aid, they'll give you a task to prove that you're worthy of living again. If you succeed at this challenge, they return you to life (all FALLS are restored). If you fail, your soul is forfeit.

If you are *EN FUEGO* when you petition a spirit to bring you back, you can use your *SUPER ATAQUE* to make a bargain: they'll give you enough life to finish a specific task of your choice, but you must use part of your soul as collateral.




If you make this pact, you return to life at -1 maximum FALL, but gain +1 to all dice rolls related to your task. If you complete the task, you regain your lost FALL. If you die again before completing the task, your soul is forfeit.

HOW TO CALL A MATCH

As the ANNOUNCER it's your job to present challenges for the *LUCHADORES* to overcome, cheer them on when they succeed, and keep the story moving forward (even and especially when they fail). This means you should punch with intent, keep things moving, talk things out, make hard choices, and above all - make sure everyone's having fun.

Punching with intent means that there's always a reason behind why bad things happen in game. You might be playing all of the antagonists in the game but you, out of game, are not an antagonist. If you introduce a setback or a difficult villain, it should be because it makes the story more interesting. This doesn't mean you always have to make things easy! It's OK for the *LUCHADORES* to lose a fight against a powerful Boss if they can spend the rest of the session learning the Boss's weaknesses and planning a new strategy. In-game actions always have to have consequences, but not all of them have to be bad or punishing.

Keeping things moving means that when the game feels like it's slowing down, you give it a nudge forward so the session doesn't stall out. When a *LUCHADOR* fails a roll, have them fail forward - they might do what they attempted but have to deal with an unexpected consequence. If it's not interesting to find out if a *LUCHADOR* succeeds or fails, don't have them roll. If a *LUCHADOR* searches a crime scene for clues, just tell them what they find! If it feels like you're stuck, offer the *LUCHADORES* a carrot to guide them or brandish a stick to push them, but always move forward.



Talking things out means that if there's something happening in the game that needs to be addressed, you want to know what the *LUCHADORES* want to do next in the game, or there's something about the rules you'd like to change, you discuss it openly and honestly with everyone else and make an informed decision. If you don't have any ideas for what a location looks like, or what villain from the *LUCHADORES* past is back for revenge, ask them and use the answers! Communication is key.

Making hard choices means that when there's a rule you want to use that's not in the book, or you don't like a rule and want to get rid of it, or everyone looks to you for an answer, you make a concrete decision with confidence. The rules in this game are meant to be evocative and provide a foundation for you to build on. If there isn't a rule for something you want to do, make one up or borrow one from another game. If there's a rule that you want to change or remove, go ahead and change it!

Making sure everyone's having fun means that you check in with the group to see how everyone's doing, you respect people's boundaries, and you cheer alongside everyone when something cool happens during the game. You asked everyone to be here, right? If you or anyone else isn't having fun, talk about why and find out how you can make things better.

"...Y SU Oponente..."

MINIONS

- Defeated after 1 FALL each.
- When attacking, Minions either inflict 1 FALL if they're dangerous OR a Disadvantage if they're hindering.
- **Gang Up:** Minions can become a GANG to combine their FALLS; when they do, they move and attack as a group. Attacking or acting against a GANG that outnumbers you two-to-one gives you a Disadvantage!

ENFORCERS

- Defeated after 2 FALLS each.
- When attacking, Enforcers can choose to either inflict 1 FALL (or 2 if the attack is *BRUTAL*) or a Disadvantage (like grappling).
- **Create Minor Hazard:** Something small in the environment changes, making things *más peligroso* for the *LUCHADORES*.
- **Boost Morale:** Once during a fight, an Enforcer can give a MINION or GANG +1 FALL, or give them +1 FALL to their next attack.

BOSESSES

- Defeated after 3 FALLS each.
- When attacking, Bosses can choose to either to inflict 1 FALL (or more, as appropriate), a Disadvantage (like a curse or ice from a freeze ray), or both.
- **Create Major Hazard:** A large part of the environment changes, making things *mucho más peligroso* for the *LUCHADORES*.
- **Call for Reinforcements:** Once during a fight, a Boss can summon up to 1 MINION GANG and 1 ENFORCER (they don't have to appear at the same time).
- **Warded:** Each Boss has a unique defense that makes them immune to FALLS. This WARD can be broken by a *SUPER ATAQUE* or a special action.
- **Dramatic Return:** A Boss can come back from defeat in any later scene!
- **Narrative Convenience:** A Boss can do anything else not listed here that they reasonably should be able to, based on the game's fiction.

ESTA NOCHE, NOS LUCHAMOS CONTRA...



An old rival challenges you in the ring to make you pay for the humiliation they suffered at your hands. They've brought some dangerous friends, too..

You've arrived at the lab of an evil scientist who's been building something for a nefarious purpose. What horror lies within: an army of abominations, a death ray, or something far worse?

You've defeated a rampaging monster, but before you can finish it off it slips between worlds! The only way to keep it from causing more harm to the innocent is to hunt it across *El Mundo Espiritual*.



¿O TAL VEZ, NOS LUCHAMOS CONTRA...



For weeks, *los Norteños* have been sweeping through low-income neighborhoods and abducting "criminals." To silence protesters, they just deployed the Frozen Legion - riot police infused with magical ice. Who will oppose them?

A new narcotic just hit the streets that hooks anyone who takes it. Who's taking advantage of these people? A power-hungry drug lord looking to build an empire? A vampire cultivating a new herd? A *Norteño* undercover fed trying to destabilize the community? Something else?

On *el Día de los Muertos*, the souls of the dead return but not all of them are kind. The downtown festival is interrupted by spirits wreaking havoc! Why are they here? What do they want?



**"NEVERTHELESS, I HAVE TO
CONTINUE. I HAVE TO GO ON THE
WAY MY ANCESTORS DID, AND
ELIMINATE EVIL OF ANY KIND."**



- SANTO VS. THE VAMPIRE WOMEN