



Cue to Cue

RESOURCE GUIDE

for Educators and Audience Members

LUCHADORA!



Welcome to Cue to Cue, an educational resource guide created to help teachers, parents/guardians, and young audience members enhance the experience of watching *Luchadora!*

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Big Themes

- Family
- Gender Stereotypes
- Lucha Libre - Mexican Wrestling
- Migration
- Migrant Farming
- Culture/Ethnicity
- Secrets
- The Masks We Wear

Short Show Description

Imagine the Chinese legend Hua Mulan set in the world of lucha libre—Mexican wrestling! That sets the scene for *Luchadora!* by Alvaro Saar Rios. When Vanessa discovers a pink lucha libre mask, Nana Lupita tells her granddaughter about the family's history in the wrestling ring in 1960s Texas. The life of a secret female warrior emerges as Vanessa learns about family, honor, and friendship.

Full Synopsis

A Mysterious Briefcase

Vanessa returns Nana Lupita's briefcase, which interrupts her watching lucha libre. Handing over the case, she admits to looking inside and reveals a pink mask. When she asks her grandmother what it is, Nana Lupita resists at first. Both women are stubborn and have a secret. Finally, she gives in and reveals the remaining contents of the briefcase: newspaper clippings, pictures, and memorabilia. She shares her story.

Texas, 1968

Growing up in Texas in 1968, for most kids, summer meant playing at the park or swimming, but for Lupita, it meant working at her father's flower stand. Luckily, her friends, Liesl and Leopold, were around to keep her company.

Desperate to go on a bike ride, the kids convince Lupita's father to allow them to deliver a briefcase for him. Along the way, they sing a German song Liesl and Leopold's older sister taught them. The town is full of people who speak German, English, and Spanish. Lupita loves it.

Casa de las Mascaras

Lupita delivers the briefcase to the Mask Maker. The Mask Maker creates elaborate masks for luchadors, or as she calls them, real life superheroes. The Mask Maker reveals she knows Lupita and not only that, had a vision about her. She pictured her on a journey to a city of bricks near the water. She shares that Lupita's mother loved lucha libre and had a favorite luchador, Mascara Rosa. When Lupita asks who it is, the Mask Maker tells her to ask her father. The trio attempts to leave the store because Liesl beat a group of boys in thumb wrestling. When things get heated, Lupita pulls a wrestling move and the boys promise to leave them alone.

Mascara Rosa

When Lupita returns to her father she sees his back has given out again. She helps him up and convinces him to tell her about Mascara Rosa, the fastest Luchador around. El Hijo has challenged

Mascara Rosa and Lupita wonders if he will accept. Her father thinks he will very soon with his signature move, sending the competitor a rose.

Present Day

Nana Lupita shows Vanessa a picture of her parents in front of a church in Milwaukee. They traveled there to pick fruit because they were migrant farmers. Vanessa puts two and two together that Milwaukee is the city from the Mask Maker's vision.

Mascara contra Mascara

El Hijo received a rose in the mail, which means Mascara Rosa accepted his challenge! Their battle will take place in Milwaukee. The only thing more exciting would be if they were fighting, "Mascara contra Mascara," which means the loser gets unmasked in front of the entire audience.

Curiosity gets the better of Lupita and finally, she opens her father's briefcase. She discovers a pink mask, her father is Mascara Rosa. Knowing her father's physical limitations, she is terrified for him. She returns to the Mask Maker and finds her father there. He reveals he is in fact Mascara Rosa and shares his story with her.

After the hard work of migrant farming, he got into wrestling. At first, he failed. His wife was a huge supporter of him and once he harnessed his gift of speed, he started to win. His body began to break down and his wife was determined to find a new Mascara Rosa to fight in his place. Unfortunately, she got sick and passed

away. He never fought again, until now.

Secrets

Lupita is upset and worried about her father. Leopold tries to cheer her up with a secret. He knows where his older sister is located. A few months ago, she ran away. Leopold shares she joined the military and is fighting in the Vietnam War.

Returning to the Mask Maker, Lupita asks her to train her to fight El Hijo in place of her father. The Mask Maker agrees to train her, but only if she does not tell anyone. It will be their secret.

In present time, Vanessa reveals she wants to be a boxer. Nana Lupita encourages her. In fact, she did not accidentally forget her briefcase at Vanessa's house, she intentionally did so she could share this story.

Act 2

My Time is Very Important

In order to train, Lupita needs Leopold to help her cover the flower stand. He agrees, after all, what are best friends for? When she arrives for her training, she discovers the Mask Maker is her trainer and because she is late, she refuses to train her. Her time is extremely important. Lupita will get one more day to prove herself to the Mask Maker. Lupita arrives early the next day and once they get started, the Mask Maker realizes she has a lot of work to do!

Defying Stereotypes

Meanwhile, back at the flower stand,

Lupita's father sees she's not there. Leopold and Liesl cover for her and share the news that they heard from their sister Hannah. She's joined the Army and even though some people treat her differently for being a girl, she refuses to not follow her dream.

Lupita continues to train in the art of lucha libre from the Mask Maker. From the tradition of passing down the mask from father to son, to unmasking competitors in battle, there is much to learn.

War hits Home

Leopold is unable to cover for her and Lupita discovers Hannah has been killed in Vietnam. Leopold tells Lupita he cannot lie for her anymore. Lupita stands firm in not telling him what she is doing. She must keep her secret.

Are you Ready to Finish What She Started?

As the match gets closer, the Mask Maker reveals to Lupita she must defeat her father first. He will show up to match unless he is replaced. Prior to her mother's death, she was in fact training to replace Lupita's father too. The Mask Maker asks her, "are you ready to finish what she started?"

Wearing the mask, Lupita defeats her father. When the Mask Maker asks if he will pass the mask along and keep Mascara Rosa alive, he says he will, but wishes he had a son to keep the tradition alive. Lupita reveals herself to him and runs off upset. Lupita's father realizes his world is changing and he must make space for progress. He passes his mask

on to Lupita.

A Trip to Milwaukee

Lupita finally shares her secret with Leopold. He is relieved they are still friends. He and Liesl decide they must join for the match.

The next week, they all drive to Milwaukee together. Lupita's father shares the sites and family history along the way, including the watermelon fields where he worked.

Victory!

The day of the match finally arrives: July 29th, 1968. Lupita defeats El Hijo as Mascara Rosa. She decides not to unmask her competitor.

In present time, Nana Lupita shows Vanessa her championship belt. Vanessa wishes her grandmother had not stopped wrestling, to which she responds, "who says I did?" In fact, she shares she is defending her title tomorrow. Vanessa holds the belt high and a wrestling bell is heard.

The Creators

Playwright

Alvaro Saar Rios is a Texican playwright living in Chicago. His plays have been performed in New York City, Mexico City, Hawaii, Chicago, St. Louis, Milwaukee and all over Texas. He has received playwriting commissions from various organizations, including the Kennedy Center, Chicago Children's Theatre, First Stage, Houston Grand Opera, Honolulu Theatre for Youth, Purple Rose Theatre Company, Houston Community College, Zoological Society of Milwaukee, and The Rose Theater. Rios' award-winning play, *Luchadora!* is published by Dramatic Publishing. Other plays include *On the Wings of a Mariposa*, *The History of Mexicans in 10 Minutes*, *The Day the Music Came Back*, and *Carmela Full of Wishes*. He holds an M.F.A. in writing for the stage and screen from Northwestern University. Rios is a resident playwright at Chicago Dramatists and playwright-in-residence at Milwaukee's First Stage. He is also a proud veteran of the U.S. Army and an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Pre-Show Discussion Questions

The following conversation starters will help you think about the themes in *Luchadora!*, as well as make some predictions about the production itself. Discuss the following before you join us at the theatre.

1. The characters in the play all come from different places with histories of migration and immigration. What places do you associate with your family or family history? If you do not have specific places in mind, what current places do you and your family (or chosen family) visit? Do you have a favorite memory associated with a place? What is it? Can you describe it in detail?
2. The play explores gender stereotypes across sports, athletics, and even the military. Who are some of your favorite celebrities, athletes, or even people in your own life who defy gender stereotypes? What do they do?
3. Many of the characters in the play wear literal or figurative masks, hiding who they really are. Why might someone wear a mask? What are ways to support them in sharing their truth with others?

Standards: LAFS.K-8.RL.1.1, LAFS.K-8.RL.1.2, LAFS.K-8.RL.1.3

Post-Show Discussion Questions

We hope you enjoyed Orlando Repertory Theatre's production of *Luchadora!*. Discuss the following questions after attending the performance.

1. What was *Luchadora!* about? Describe the beginning, middle, and end. What was the climax of the story? Why? If you had to summarize the play in one sentence, what would it be?
2. What did you notice when you first entered the theatre? Describe the stage.
3. *Luchadora* takes place in the present day as well as in the past - 1968. Did the set and scenery help establish the show's location or time? What specific things did you notice about the set and stage lights: color, shape, texture? Did you notice anything about the set or lights that you thought was unique?
4. What did you notice about the actors and their performances? How did they use their voices and bodies to bring the characters to life?
5. Which character do you relate to the most? Why? What words describe that character?

Standards: LAFS.K-8.RL.1.1, LAFS.K-8.RL.1.2 , LAFS.K-8.RL.1.3, LAFS.K-8.RL.2.6, LAFS.K-8.RI.1.2, TH.K.C.2.1 , TH.K.C.3.2, TH.1.C.2.2, TH.1.S.3.2, TH.2.O.2.1, TH.3.C.1.2, TH.3.C.2.2, TH.3.O.2.1, TH.3.O.1.2, TH.3.S.1.3, TH.3.S.3.3, TH.4.O.1.1, TH.4.C.3.1, TH.4.S.1.1, TH.4.S.1.3, TH.4.S.3.3, TH.5.O.1.1, TH.5.O.1.3, TH.5.O.3.1, TH.5.S.1.3, TH.5.S.3.3, TH.68.O.1.2, TH.68.S.2.3, TH.68.H.1.5



> Sports and Gender

Lupita is not the only person defying gender stereotypes in the world of lucha libre. Check out the real life Cholitas representing indigenous women in the sport.

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

After watching the video, what did you think? How did the athletes face gender stereotyping? What did they find the most rewarding about their profession? What is something you learned from watching the video?

Exploration of Themes in *Luchadora!*

> Lucha Libre

What is [lucha libre](#)?

Lucha libre is a form of professional wrestling popular in Mexico and other countries. In Peru, it is called “cachascán” (from “catch as can”) and in Argentina and other countries, it is sometimes called “el catch.” Lucha libre has a large presence in Mexican popular culture. Famous luchadors and luchadoras have inspired storytellers all around the world. Lucha libre can be found in popular books, movies, and television shows for young people and adults alike.

ELA Activities by Grade

K-2nd Grade Activity:

Read, *Niño Wrestles the World* by Yuyi Morales. [Visit Yuyi Morales website](#) to color your own masks! If you want, draw your own original mask - if you were a lucha libre, what would your mask look like?

3rd-5th Grade Activity: Writing

Create your own trading cards for lucha libre wrestlers. On the front, draw a picture of a mask for your lucha libre character. On the back, write the character name, catch phrase, and special moves or things your character can do! Make copies and trade with friends in your class. See if you can collect an entire class set! Compare and contrast the lucha libre characters from your class!

Middle & High School Activity: Writing

Write a creative response - poem, short story, or character profile inspired by the following prompt:

“The masks we wear...”

Standards: WL.K12.AH.5.7

Vocabulary and Definitions in *Luchadora!*

English

| | |
|------------------|--|
| figure of speech | a word or phrase used in a non-literal sense for rhetorical or vivid effect. |
| identity | the fact of being who or what a person or thing is. |
| assistance | the action of helping someone with a job or task. |
| nonsense | spoken or written words that have no meaning or make no sense. |
| consumed | completely destroyed (in the context of the play). |
| instincts | a natural or intuitive way of acting or thinking. |
| descendent | descending from an ancestor. |

Spanish

| | |
|----------------|---|
| chankla | flip flop |
| lucha libre | freestyle wrestling (Mexican wrestling) |
| luchadores | male wrestlers who wear masks |
| sopa | soup |
| sandía | watermelon |
| a los caballos | to the horses |
| panadería | bakery |
| paciencia | patience |
| manzanas | apples |
| rebozo | shawl |
| corazón | heart |

German

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| freut euch des lebens | enjoy life |
| weil noch das lampchen gluhet | while the lamp still glows |
| plucket die rose | pick the rose |
| eh sie verbluht | before it wilts |



Additional Resources

Stories about Lucha Libre:

- *Lucha Libre: Anatomy – Anatomia* by Patty Rodriguez and Ariana Stein, illustrated by Citlali Reyes
- *The Great and Mighty Nikko* by Xavier Garza
- *Nino Wrestles the World* by Yuyi Morales
- *Training Day (El Toro and Friends)* by Raul the Third
- *Maximilian and the Lucha Libre Club: A Bilingual Lucha Libre Thriller (Max's Lucha Libre Adventures)* by Xavier Garza
- *Tito the Bonecrusher* by Melissa Thomson
- *Bump* by Matt Wallace
- *Takedown* by Laura Shoven

Stories similar to *Luchadora!*

- *Lucía the Luchadora* series by Cynthia Leonor Garza, illustrated by Alyssa Bermudez
- *Lucía the Luchadora and the Million+ Masks* by Cynthia Leonor Garza, illustrated by Alyssa Bermudez

[Learn more about Cynthia Leonor Garza here.](#)

Florida State Standards

Detailed list of Florida State Standards satisfied by using this guide and attending Orlando REP's production of *Luchadora!*

Language Arts Florida Standards

(Text refers to the play, the script, or the content in this guide.)

Reading/Text Analysis Standards:

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.3 Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

LAFS.K-8.RI.3.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral.

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

LAFS.K-8.RI.2.6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.2 Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

Vocabulary Standards:

LAFS.2-8.L.3.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

LAFS.2-8.L.3.5 Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

Writing Standards:

LAFS.K-8.W.1.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

WL.K12.AH.5.7 Write creative pieces (poetry, narratives, and plays) using effective imagery and the appropriate literary devices to genre.

Theatre Arts:

TH.K.C.2.1 Respond to a performance and share personal preferences about parts of the performance.

TH.K.C.3.2 Share reactions to a live theatre performance.

TH.1.C.2.2 Identify elements of an effective performance.

TH.1.S.3.2 Describe characters and plot development discovered during dramatic play.

TH.2.O.2.1 Re-tell what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of a story after viewing a play.

TH.3.C.1.2 Watch a play and describe how the elements of light,

costumes, props, and sound influence the mood of the production.

TH.3.C.2.2 Discuss the meaning of an artistic choice to support development of critical thinking and decision-making skills.

TH.3.O.2.1 Describe what happened in a play, using age-appropriate theatre terminology.

TH.3.O.1.2 Discuss why costumes and makeup are used in a play.

TH.3.S.1.3 Evaluate a performance, using correct theatre terms, and give specific examples to support personal opinions.

TH.3.S.3.3 Describe elements of dramatic performance that produce an emotional response in oneself or an audience.

TH.4.O.1.1 Describe what a designer and director do to support the actor in creating a performance.

TH.4.C.3.1 Identify the characteristics of an effective acting performance.

TH.4.S.1.1 Exhibit proper audience etiquette, give constructive criticism, and defend personal responses.

TH.4.S.1.3 Use theatre terms to evaluate a live performance and discuss the qualities that directly impacted the audience's response to the production.

TH.4.S.3.3 Describe elements of dramatic and technical performance that produce an emotional response in oneself or an audience.

TH.5.O.1.1 Explain an actor's choices in the creation of a character for a scene or play.

TH.5.O.1.3 Evaluate how an actor or designer's choices about a character affect the audience's understanding of a play.

TH.5.O.3.1 Describe a variety of theatrical methods and/or conventions that a group of individuals can use to communicate with audiences.

TH.5.S.1.3 Evaluate a performance, using theatre terminology, and articulate emotional responses to the whole and parts of dramatic performances.

TH.5.S.3.3 Use elements of dramatic and technical performance designed to produce an emotional response in an audience.

TH.68.O.1.2 Discuss how color, line, shape, and texture are used to show emotion in technical theatre elements.

TH.68.S.2.3 Analyze the relationships of plot, conflict, and theme in a play and transfer the knowledge to a play that contrasts in style, genre, and/or mood.

TH.68.H.1.5 Describe one's own personal responses to a theatrical work and show respect for the responses of others.