

TEACHER'S GUIDE

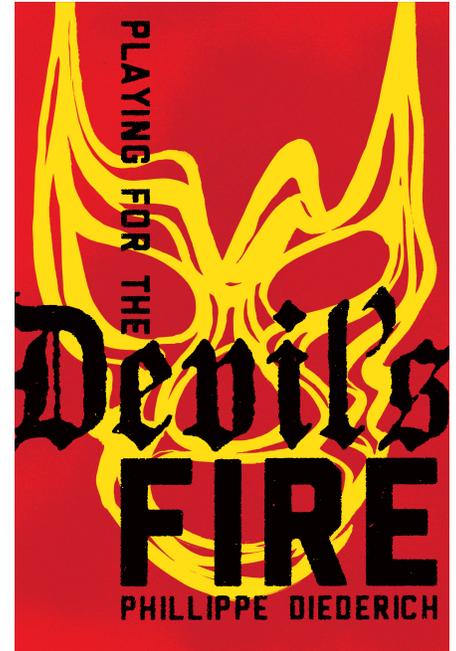
ALIGNED WITH COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Playing For the Devil's Fire

By Phillippe Diederich

Liberio "Boli" lives with his family in Izayoc, a small town in central Mexico, and spends most of his time hanging out with his friends playing marbles and shining shoes for spending money. When the children in the neighborhood find the head of one of their teachers in the middle of town, Boli and his family realize that there is trouble afoot. Boli's parents attempt to report the murder of the professor and other citizens, but go missing. Boli's life changes completely. With the influence of a famous luchador, Boli, his sister, and his grandmother realize they have to move past the horrible events and create a new life.

The following questions are aligned with the Common Core Standards for grades 9 and 10. The corresponding standard can be found after each question.



Chapter 1-3

1. As you read the first three chapters, create a list of each of Boli's family members and his friends. Describe each character physically, using at least three adjectives. Describe their personalities using at least three adjectives. Compare and contrast Boli with at least 2 of the characters that are his age. How are the children the same? How are they different? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
2. What is important about the Devil's Fire marble? What does it represent? Why does each of the children want an opportunity to win it? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.4)
3. How do the children that we are introduced to in the first three chapters get their nicknames? How does each reflect the nature of the character? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.5)
4. What interrupts the boy's discussion about the *Diablito Rojo*? What caused the Professor's death? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
5. What is Boli's relationship with Zopilote? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
6. What motivates the argument concerning the Nike shoes between Zopilote and Boli? Why is it important whether or not the shoes are "real"? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.6)
7. Why is the appearance of the Expedition notable? Who do you think is inside of the truck? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)

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8. What do Ximena and Regina say will change the town? What clues does the text concede that indicate that the town of Izayoc may indeed change? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2*)
9. Why does Mosca decide not to fight Zopilote? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
10. How does Boli feel about the *feria* and the *luchadores*? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9*)
11. Describe the woman that the boys found in the field. How did she end up there? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
12. Describe Boli's relationship with his grandmother? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
13. Who was Dorian, and why does the conversation about him contribute to the tense mood at the dinner table? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.5*)
14. Why do Boli's parents say that they need him and his sister at the bakery? Are their motivations as clear as they seem? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
15. What does Boli overhear after he is supposed to be in bed? How does he react? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)

Chapter 4-6

1. Describe the bakery. How does Boli feel about working there? Cite examples from the text that support your reasoning. (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
2. Describe the relationship between Boli and Lucio. (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
3. Why does Boli's father tell him to stay in the back of the bakery? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
4. How do the townspeople feel about Pineda? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
5. What do Boli's parents decide to do to help Yolanda and her family? Are their intentions pure? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2*)
6. Why don't Boli's parents want anyone to know where they are going? What are they afraid of? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
7. How does Boli feel about Izayoc? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.6*)
8. What does Lucio say about the rats and mice? Explain how this is a metaphor for the town? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2*)
9. Who is Chapopote? How does Boli meet him? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
10. Describe the neighborhood where Mosca lives. How is it different from the neighborhood where Boli lives? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.6*)

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11. Why does Boli feel that his parents are lucky when he discusses the trip to Toluca? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
12. How does Boli feel about Santo the *luchador*? Why does he see the *luchadores* as heroes? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9*)
13. Why won't Mosca play against the boys at school for the *Diablito Rojo*? How does Pepino try to convince him to play for it? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
14. How does Mosca comfort Boli about his parents? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
15. Describe how Boli feels about Ximena. How is he affected when he sees her kissing another boy? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)

Chapter 7-9

1. How does Boli's family try to rationalize the fact that his parents have not yet returned? How does each family member left behind feel about this situation? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
2. What do Gaby and Boli try to do concerning their parents? What happens when they arrive at their destination? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2*)
3. Describe Pineda. Is he corrupt? Defend your response using information that you find within the text that describes him. (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
4. Why doesn't the church have bells? What does their absence represent? What do the citizens of the town think about this fact? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.6*)
5. What does Gaby do after waiting for so long in Pineda's office? How do the other characters react to her? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
6. What does Pineda think the children should do about their missing parents? What motivates his advice? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
7. How does Boli feel about the absence of his parents? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
8. How do the neighbors respond to what has happened to Boli's family? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
9. What are the signs that someone wants a shoe shine? How does Boli decide who to approach when he is working? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
10. Does Ximena want Boli to talk to the men that she is with in the Plaza? Defend your response using evidence from the text that supports your position. (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
11. Describe the way that Boli works on Joaquin's boots. What is Joaquin's response when Boli is finished? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)

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12. How does Boli react to being asked to clean a pair of sneakers? Why does Joaquin ask Boli to lick the sneakers when he finishes? What is he trying to accomplish by dropping the money that he owes Boli on the ground? How does Boli react? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
13. What does Father Gregorio say about suffering? How does Boli feel about suffering? How are their opinions different and the same? How did each form his opinion? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9*)
14. What is Father Gregorio's advice to Boli about his parents? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
15. What does Mosca suggest Boli do concerning his parents? Is this a feasible solution? Why? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)

Chapter 10-12

1. Where does Zopilote get the car? What do you think his job is? Is it an honorable career? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
2. Why does Mosca wait so long to play Pepino for the *Diablito Rojo*? Predict the outcome of the match. (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
3. Why won't Pepino let Mosca play in the match for the prized marble? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
4. Describe the relationship between Kiko and Pepino during the marble match. (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
5. Who wins the match? Does this outcome surprise you? Why? What is the winner's reaction? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
6. What does Don Ignacio mean when he says "Pay, leave, or die"? Who is he paying money to? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.4*)
7. Why is Boli concerned when Mosca says that people will pay him for games with the *Diablito Rojo*? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
8. What did the citizens of Izayoc find in the junkyard? To whom did it belong? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
9. How does Boli react when the men find the leg? Who does he worry it belongs to? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
10. Describe Boli's relationship with this father. How does Boli feel about him now that he's missing? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
11. How does Lucio treat the poor kids that come by the bakery? Why do you think he gives the children the extra bread? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)

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12. Why is Boli hesitant to go into the *cantinas*? What happens when he decides to go in after all? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2)
13. What does the man in the car ask the boys? What happens next? How do the boys react? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
14. Why are the adults worried about Boli the morning after he hears the gunshot? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
15. Boli and his grandmother have a conversation about Veracruz. Predict whether you think they will go to live there based on information given in the book up until this point. How does the author create a sense of uncertainty about what they will do? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.4)

Chapter 13-15

1. How does Boli feel about the changes in Izayoc? How do you know? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
2. What changes the overall atmosphere in the town during the *feria*? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
3. What does Boli find out about his sister while he is at the *feria*? How does he react? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
4. Why is Boli supposed to stay in the house instead of going to the wrestling match? What convinces him to go instead of following the directions he has been given by his sister? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
5. How is the wrestling match different than what the boys expected? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9)
6. What is a *tecnico*? What is a *rudo*? Which of the two fighters from this match does Boli prefer and why? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9)
7. Why does Boli choose to root for Chicano? Who wins the match? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9)
8. How does the crowd react to the outcome of the *luchador* match? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
9. What does Mosca discover when he returns home from the *feria*? What does he do in response? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
10. Where does Boli find his grandmother? Where was she going? Why? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
11. What does Abuela suggest that Boli and his sister do? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
12. What are the two men doing in front of the cantina? What does Boli do when he sees what they

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are up to? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)

13. What happens to Boli as a result of his interference in the fight between Chicano and the men in front of the cantina? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
14. Why does Boli decide to help Chicano? What assumptions does Boli make about Chicano based upon his involvement with the luchadores? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9)
15. Why does Boli have Chicano sleep in the shed? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)

Chapter 16-18

1. Why does Boli worry about his sister? Using examples from the book, explain whether or not his concern is warranted, using evidence from the text to support your response. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
2. What is Abuela's solution for the trouble that Boli's family is facing? Does Boli agree with her? Why? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
3. How does Boli feel about Father Gregorio now? How has his opinion of the priest changed? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
4. Does Boli still believe that his parents are alive? How do you know? Support your response with evidence from the text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2)
5. How does Abuela change after she attempts to run away to Veracruz? What do you attribute this change to? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
6. Why are Boli and Abuela turned away from Los Pinos? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
7. How does Chicano react to Boli when he wakes up after the fight? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
8. Why is Boli disappointed in the *lucha libre* business after he talks with Chicano? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
9. Chicano says "You're not seeing the world in front of you for what it really is." to Boli. In what ways is Boli disillusioned? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.4)
10. Why is Chicano reluctant to help Boli? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
11. In your opinion, does Chicano stay to help Boli or does he stay because of Ximena? Support your response with evidence from the text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
12. Why is Gaby angry with Boli? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
13. How does Boli feel about Gaby's boyfriend? Why? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
14. What does the luchador movie remind Boli of? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9)

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15. In what state of mind is Chicano when returns to Boli's house? What does Boli decide to do with him? Why doesn't Jesusa want to help? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*

Chapter 19-21

1. Why does Father Gregorio want Boli to come to confession? What does the Father tell Boli when they are in the confessional? How does this affect Boli? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
2. How does Boli's opinion of the newcomers differ from that of Father Gregorio? Why? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*
3. Describe the differences between how Boli sees Chicano and the way Chicano sees himself? To what do you attribute the differences in their perspectives? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
4. What do the people in Izayoc find at the overpass? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
5. What does Boli want Chicano to do with the bodies? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
6. Why doesn't Gaby want Chicano to stay with Boli's family? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9)*
7. Why won't Chicano remove his mask? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9)*
8. What significance does Mexico City hold for Boli? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
9. Why does Regina think that Boli might get hurt? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
10. How does Chicano respond to Zopilote? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
11. What does it mean when Chicano says "Strength is an illusion"? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9)*
12. What is wrong with Kiko when he first approaches Boli? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
13. Who is Duende? How would you describe him? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*
14. What does Father Gregorio tell Boli about his parent's car? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
15. Describe the Devil's Ravine. Who do Chicano and Boli see while they are there? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*

Chapter 22-24

1. Why does Chicano tease Jesusa? What is her response? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
2. What does Chicano say about being poor? Drawing from other events in the book, do you agree with Chicano? Why? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2)*
3. What was significant about Abuela's invitation to Jesusa to sit at the dinner table? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*

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4. How is Abuela's description of Veracruz different in these chapters compared to those at the beginning of the book? How has the author developed Abuela as a more rational character in these chapters? Cite evidence from the text to support your response. *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.4)*
5. How does Chicano feel about the way that the adults have been treating Boli concerning his parents? Cite evidence from the text to support your response. *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*
6. Describe Chicano's past. How does he feel about the things he has done? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*
7. What happens to Chicano, Boli and Mosca when they return to Devil's Ravine? How does each character respond to the event? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*
8. What is the object that the boys find after they are attacked? Why is it important? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
9. Why do Chicano, Boli and Mosca follow the creek back into town instead of following the road? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
10. Why does Chapo start to bark when the boys are walking home? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
11. What do the boys discover when they are walking home? Compare and contrast the differences in the way Mosca responds to the event with the way Boli responds. *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*
12. How does Chicano react when he sees Gaby before her date? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
13. Why is Gaby upset with Chicano when she introduces Francisco to her family? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
14. Describe Francisco. Based on evidence from the book, do you think he is working with the people who have killed the citizens of Izayoc? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*
15. What causes the argument between Gaby and Abuela? How does each character rationalize her point of view? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*

Chapter 25-27

1. Compare and contrast Boli's neighborhood with Mosca's. How are the lives of the two boys different? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2)*
2. Why does Mosca take the job from Pepino? How does this affect Mosca's relationship with Boli? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*
3. Describe the plaza. How has it changed since the beginning of the story? What events have brought on this change? How does the author use pacing to show that the change is gradual? Provide examples from the book up to his point to support your response? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.5)*

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4. Why does Lucio decide to leave Izayoc? Where does he plan to go? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
5. How does Boli feel about all of the changes in his town? How does he respond to Lucio's advice? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
6. How is the movie *Santo Against the Female Werewolves* similar to Boli's situation? Clarify your response with evidence from the text. (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9*)
7. What does Boli find at the gate? Why is it placed there? Who did it? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2*)
8. What is Boli's response to the discovery of Chapo? Why is it especially difficult for him? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
9. How does Chicano describe life? Do you agree or disagree? Support your response with evidence from the text. (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2*)
10. How has Chicano changed since he first arrived at Boli's home? Provide evidence that supports your response. (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
11. What event or events helps Boli realize that his parents are not coming home? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
12. How does Father Gregorio respond to Boli's request to bury Chapo? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
13. How do Boli and Chicano feel about God? What are their reasons? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2*)
14. What do Boli and Chicano find out after they bury Chapo? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
15. What is confirmed about Father Gregorio? How is it revealed? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)

Chapter 28-30

1. Why is Abuela upset when Boli returns to the house? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
2. Why does Boli ask his grandmother not to leave yet? What is her response? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)
3. What does Boli discover about the *luchador*? How does his discovery affect him? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1*)
4. Why does Boli attack Chicano? How does Chicano respond? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2*)
5. How does Chicano describe Ximena? Based on information that you have read earlier in the text, do you think Chicano's description is accurate? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3*)

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6. What does Boli realize about his father and Rocio? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
7. What Gaby mean when she says “You’re sweet” when Boli asks whether or not she loves Francisco? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.4)*
8. Describe the mood in the town when Chicano and Boli walk though it. What words in the text inform your opinion? To what can you attribute the change in mood compared to the beginning of the book? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.4)*
9. Summarize the conversation between Pineda and Chicano. Why is the conversation so tense? Why is it important that Chicano mentions the Federal Police? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
10. Why does Chicano confront Zopilote? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*
11. What events convince Boli that all people lie? Based on his experiences do you believe his opinion can be justified? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2)*
12. What is the significance of Father Gregorio ordering the new bells for the church? What do the bells represent? Why does the author wait until the end of the book to tell the reader this information even though, the priest has likely been accepting money from the new parishioners all along? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.5)*
13. From where does Father Gregorio say he got the gold watch? According to evidence from the text, do you believe he is telling the truth? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2)*
14. What has Abuela come to realize concerning the new people in town? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
15. Why does Ximena stop letting Chicano come in the house? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*

Chapter 31-33

1. What is significant about Pepino’s use of the word “broder”? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.4)*
2. What does Pepino tell Boli about his future? Do you believe he will join forces with Pepino? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
3. How does Boli realize that Mosca is dead? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
4. What does Boli remember when he passes out from the pain of the beating? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*
5. What happened to Francisco? How does Gaby respond? What is her motivation? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*
6. Where does Boli run to when he realizes that Chicano is missing? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)*
7. What happened to Chicano Estrada? Why? *(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)*

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8. What does Boli's family decide to do after he recovers? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
9. Predict what Veracruz will be like. Will it live up to the stories that Abuela has told? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2)
10. What does Boli decide to do after he gets to Veracruz? What helped him come to this decision? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)

Whole Text Questions

1. What are two main themes from the text? Describe how the author develops each theme throughout the text? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2)
2. Throughout the book, the author makes several references to the *luchadores* and *lucha libre*. In addition, the author he often juxtaposes the references to *Lucha Libre* with events in Boli's life. Choose one *lucha libre* reference from the book and explain how it is representative of Boli's situation, using examples from the text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.9)
3. In this text, the author includes words in Spanish. Does this addition add or detract from the writing? Why? Use examples from the book to support your response. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.4)
4. What is the relationship between Boli and his father at the beginning of the book? How does it change as time passes? Give several examples from the book to support your response. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
5. How do the family dynamics change throughout the text as time passes? What contributes to these changes? Use examples from the text to support your response. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
6. Throughout the text, there are various references to "masks", including the masking or hiding of faces, the destruction of faces, masking words, and hiding or masking feelings. Give examples of how three characters use masks, both metaphorical and/or physical. What are the consequences for each character when and if they choose to reveal what has been hidden? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2)
7. What is the role of religion in this text? Find three examples of discussions about religion that support your response. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.2)
8. Is Abuela sane or insane? Why and how does she seem to become more lucid as the text continues? What is her motivation for living in the past? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
9. Several of Boli's friends choose to help el Duende. What is the motivation for each boy to do so? Use examples from the text to support your response. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)
10. In the text, there is some discussion of what happens to "bad" girls, or girls who use their beauty to achieve goals in life. Give two examples of women in this book that are portrayed this way and then explain whether or not they deserve their fate. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.3)

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11. How does the structure of this text contribute to the overall mood of suspense? (*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.5*)