

LATINO TELENOVELA POWERED BY THE APOCALYPSE



Pasión
DE LAS
Pasiones

BY BRANDON LEON-GAMBETTA



LATINO TELENOVELA
POWERED BY THE APOCALYPSE

Ashean Edition

BY BRANDON LEON-GAMBETTA

Pasión de las Pasiones Ashean Edition is copyright Magpie Games ©2017
All Rights Reserved



Dedication and Thanks

Pasión de las Pasiones could never have happened on it's own. Like any good telenovela, it needed the passion and drive of so many people to go from an offhand comment during *Jane the Virgin* to a game in actual physical format. This book is dedicated to all of the people who brought me here: far too many to ever name or thank. I'm always going to owe and love you all. Thank you so much.

Para mi abuela, abuelo, and the rest of mi familia who instilled in me an attitude of industry and striving, a love and appreciation for my heritage, and a knowledge that distance doesn't decrease family. *Viva Perú y Go Big Red!*

- ♥ **James Malloy**, for pushing me from chatting to writing and for tackling the first draft hard. You've always put **Pasión** first, and it wouldn't be done without you.
- ♥ The **Stop, Hack, & Roll Community**, for being ridiculously supportive and talking through a thousand changes. Your game and work inspire me.
- ♥ **Mark Diaz Truman**, the *hermano* I was most terrified would be at my first playtest, who showed up and encouraged me by saying **Pasión** could be a meaningful contribution to Latinidad in the roleplaying industry.
- ♥ **Brendan Conway**, for bringing me through every move, every page, every concept. You're my gaming hero and my mentor. *¡Gracias!*
- ♥ **Avonelle Wing**, for getting me to Metatopia and lining me up with the people who could make this dream work. You run this industry.
- ♥ **Erin**, *amor de mi vida*, who supported me every time I got down or said I couldn't do it or tried to give up, for watching telenovelas with me and saying, "*La Doña* needs that move."

Thank you all so much. I couldn't have done it without all of you. I hope you love this game as much as I love all of you.

Credits

Design, Development, and Writing by Brandon Leon-Gambetta

Editing by Brendan Conway y Mark Diaz Truman

Layout and Graphic Design by Miguel Ángel Espinoza

Proofreading by Shelley Harlan y Katherine Fackrell

Most Images licensed via DepositPhotos.com standard license. Chapter 4 header image via a CC0 1.0 Universal Creative Commons license via Pixabay.



Rosa moves with hesitant steps and quick awkward glances at the staff around her. Marco's invitation to the gala had been a surprise; her name was on the schedule as wait staff until this week, after all. Still, he loves her and he's beautiful. She smooths her dress and walks into the ballroom, trying to glide.

"Ooooh, so elegant," says the mother with a growing smile of pride at beloved Rosa.

From the first dance, she is watching Marco for some hint, some crack suggesting that he could know, that he would out her as just a servant, not fit for these fine surroundings. By the second dance and the third champagne, he's laughing and professing his love. By halfway through a fourth champagne, the two are stumbling together down a hallway, giggling like young lovers.

The father shakes his daughter's shoulder a little and jokes, "Hija, don't stare too much. You're going to fall off the couch."

"I feel I know everything about you," whispers Marco on the balcony, holding Rosa's hand in his. "Even though we've known each other for so little time." The two lean in, lips trembling, her hand on his chest.

Abuela clicks her tongue "Por que siempre necesitan hacer eso? Hay niños viendo!"

She pauses to whisper, her voice huskier and throatier than he'd heard before. "Did you know I have a twin?" All it takes is a gentle push.

A collective gasp comes from the couch as Marco topples off the edge of the balcony, hands scrabbling at the railings...just as the episode ends!

Pasión de las Pasiones!

Drama, intrigue, lies and betrayal. The stories of *telenovelas* immerse the viewer deep into these choppy waters all while dazzling with glamour and glitz. These are stories of love, of lust, of hate, of vengeance. Weaving, complicated stories with characters forever on the edge of bliss or oblivion give their everything to millions of watchers hungry for the next mystery. These stories capture the imagination of the viewers and keep them talking until the next night they can dive back in again. They can be a force for social change or simply good dramatic fun.

What This Is

Pasión de las Pasiones is a hack of the roleplaying game **Apocalypse World** by D. Vincent Baker. By taking the basic structures and mechanisms of **Apocalypse World** and retooling the focus and built-in genre assumptions, a hack can portray anything from immortal demons to baby dragons to teenage superheroes.

Pasión de las Pasiones uses these rules to capture the feel of creating and watching a telenovela. In **Pasión de las Pasiones**, you'll play the characters in a telenovela: beautiful lovers, cruel villains, and those just desperately trying to stop this family from falling apart. Lies will be exposed, plots will be shattered, hearts will be broken. If you're very lucky, maybe you'll even throw El Generalísimo off a boat and get to a happy ending filled with flowers, dancing, and passion. Of course, never 'happy' or 'ending' enough to stop tomorrow's episode from plunging you back into it. Because if you didn't see the body, they'll be back.

Ashcan Edition

I'm afraid you've come to the first lie in this book: this version of **Pasión de las Pasiones** won't keep you playing day-to-day, year-to-year. This is the ashcan of the full game, a preview of **Pasión de las Pasiones** that provides a fully playable sample of the game before its actual release. You hold in your hands six playbooks, a host of basic moves, flashback and audience mechanics—at least enough for an episode of play but probably not enough to keep you busy longer term. The rest of **Pasión de las Pasiones** is just around the corner though: see www.magpiegames.com/pasion for more information on the full game.

This ashcan assumes that you've played a an Apocalypse World engine game before (perhaps *Monsterhearts*, **Masks: A New Generation**, or maybe even **Apocalypse World**) and won't explain many of the core assumptions of that system. There's just not enough space in this version to capture everything that I want to be able to tell you! The full version will dispense of that; no previous experience necessary.

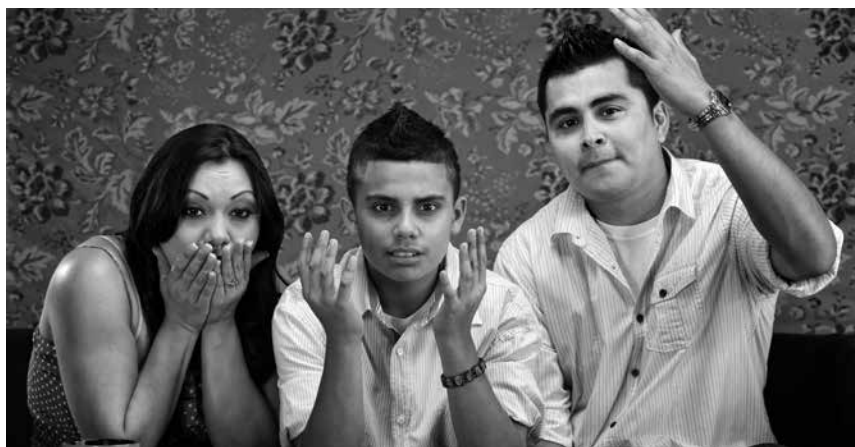
If you haven't played a Powered by the Apocalypse (PbtA) game before, then I'll do everything I can to make sure you don't get left to drown. It may not be a bad idea to at least read one other PbtA book to get a good feel of how those games go!



What You Need

In order to play a telenovela, you'll need more than what you need to watch one.

- ♥ **Players:** It's hard to have a love triangle with one person. You'll need one Game Master (GM) and three to five players to portray characters (PCs).
- ♥ **Playbooks:** **Pasión de las Pasiones** uses playbooks to help players make characters and keep track of special moves and extras. You can download all the playbooks you need at www.magpiegames.com/pasion. Print all six of the playbooks out, and let players peruse them!
- ♥ **Dice:** You need at least two six-sided dice to play, but given that everyone is going to be betraying everyone else, maybe it'd be better for everyone to have their own set.
- ♥ **Pencils and Paper:** During the game, you'll need pencils to track stress and Leverage (more on those later!) and to gain new moves. Pencil's much better than pen! Have some paper on hand for tracking relationships or maybe just writing someone's name with hearts all around it. I also bring index cards to use as name tents.
- ♥ **Time:** An episode of **Pasión de las Pasiones** takes somewhere in the range of three hours, plus probably another 30 minutes if this is the first session. If you're satisfied with a single episode, it should work fine as a one-shot; there'll just be loose ends. But that's the nature of a telenovela, isn't it?
- ♥ If you're the GM you'll want to read the majority of this ashcan if not all of it. I'd especially look at Chapter 3 where there are extra explanations of the rules and Chapter 5 for advice on keeping the show going. If you're playing, all you'll need is those playbooks.



Chapter 1: Telenovelas

The fate of the Domingo Hotel hangs in the balance as Valencio and Natalia stand and watch the pallbearers carry their father, the Domingo Patriarch who so long kept them in the finest of clothes. Natalia turns to her brother with a quirk of her lips. “It’s done then. Now...”

“We’re at his funeral,” he cuts her off, with a look of pain and rage on his face. “Have you no-” Her look silences him as she puts her hand in his arm and leads him to follow the procession.

“Today is the funeral, but tomorrow they’ll be looking for an answer. We did what we had to. Don’t pretend that the board would have easily forgiven his... missteps.” The wind catches her hair as she pats his arm affectionately. “*Pobre Valencio* ... You never had the stomach for this life. But now it is done and you and your little Carlos will be able to get away from all of the bad men and their finery.”

Valencio, his vision red and his neck bulging with rage, nearly stumbles over a griever as there is a crash ahead. Gasps of horror ring out and the crowd parts, the coffin dropped and broken open. Empty.

These stories are told over years of time with new episodes every day. There are no seasons here, no specific line where the action builds up and stops. These stories are built on twists and turns that just keep on coming.

While there is an enormous amount of variety in telenovelas, there are certain key points that hold true for most or all of them. This ashcan focuses on getting you to the action; the full book will explain how to tailor the game to your liking!

Soap Operas in Prime Time?

While the English equivalent of soap operas may seem obvious, they don't capture the sheer cultural magnitude of telenovelas. When **Yo Soy Betty, La Fea** relaunched in the United States in 2009 after its original Colombian run, over one million viewers tuned in. The BBC reported in 2006 that hundreds of millions of people globally watch telenovelas daily.

Telenovelas are often picked up by the whole family, everyone sitting down to keep up with the latest wild turns. There's something for everyone: romance, violence, intrigue, betrayal. Given their rapid production, this audience is important and can have an effect on how stories go; an urban legend described a writer granting a divorce to a leading character after he was threatened by protesters.

In **Pasión de las Pasiones**, players not only play the characters in the telenovelas, but also push the will of the audience, encouraging each other to go to the extremes of their playbooks. This includes directly affecting the story and pushing for endings they want. See more on page 14.

The Stories

So what are these stories going to be? What makes a telenovela different from an American soap opera or British television drama? And if you aren't familiar with telenovelas, how can you bring them to life at your table?

No two telenovelas are identical—**Sua Vida Me Pertence** doesn't play like **La Reina del Sur** doesn't play like **Jane the Virgin**—but there are a few elements that show up again and again. Let's take a stroll through some of the most common features, and you'll be *listo para la acción!*

Beautiful People Trying to Find Love

Looking for a quick plot for your telenovela? The couple you're rooting for from the beginning faces increasingly difficult obstacles to being together and risks everything to come together in the final episode. Want to make it a bit better? Make everyone bringing those obstacles a different potential lover. Sure, **El Jefe's** a bad guy, but there's something about him that's appealing enough that other characters can and should be attracted to him! The same goes for everyone else; even characters that lament being "past their prime" in telenovelas know how to bring stares. Don't think couples. Think triangles.



Melancholy and Joy

The telenovela parody of wind blowing through a woman's hair as tears go down her face and she cries out into the night may be an often used one, but it didn't come from nowhere. The root and core of telenovelas is taking emotion and cranking it all the way up. It isn't sad when two young lovers are separated; it's *devastating*. It isn't a happy day when a mother sees her son taking a step towards control of his life; it's the happiest day of her life. People don't talk out their feelings; they shout them and throw wine.

It may initially feel silly to play up emotions in this way, but it's also what makes telenovelas so compelling. Because the emotions matter to the characters, they matter to the audience. The emotions being bigger also makes the betrayals that much worse; how can you forgive someone when they've ripped your heart straight out of your chest (possibly for the third time in 15 episodes)?

Wealth and Status

If all of the love, passion, and betrayal weren't enough to keep track of, don't forget that the entire thing should be steeped in glamour. There's no reason you can't wear a slinky gown to a casual lunch between friends and there's no reason that lunch can't be on the veranda looking over a projected ocean. Part of this is just maintaining the first point--keeping things full of eye candy--but there's a deeper reason for it as well!

Status plays a pivotal role in telenovelas with characters wielding their influence over others like a paintbrush tied to a sledgehammer. Families and names matter. Characters have control of wealth and power, but only until they are disinherited or someone learns that they are the illegitimate twin who secretly lives on the other side of the tracks and has weaseled their way into society by coaxing a sham marriage out of... you get the idea.

You can and should find a couple of large, glamorous set pieces to return to. Perhaps one of the characters holds the controlling shares in a hotel, perhaps a mansion that has been passed down for generations. Remember who has wealth, who doesn't, and jockey to make the most of your influence. This isn't to say those without glamorous things can't have just as much control, of course... See page 16 for information on Leverage.

Romance and Sex

In case it hasn't become obvious, there's a lot of romance in this game. Characters are searching for love, power, love-to-get-power, and power-to-get-love essentially regardless of their playbook. That means a level of intimacy at the table that may be new for players unused to getting into romance!

The full book is going to take a more detailed look at this, but for the ashcan I want to touch upon a couple of points. The first is that telenovelas tend to stick



around the PG to PG-13 range; even if characters are clearly having sex there's nothing written in stone that it needs to be made explicit in any way (and I'd actually recommend keeping this faded to black). Indeed, your telenovela doesn't need to ever include sex; perhaps when you **declare your love passionately** you're looking for a chaste kiss. That's okay! Just keep the emotional stakes high!

In any game that includes this kind of content, it's important to have a plan for how to keep everyone safe and comfortable. Consider applying Lines and Veils, the X-Card, or Script Changes!

Violence

With all of these people trying to get their piece of the pie, eventually someone is going to decide to just try to take the whole thing. While violence is definitely a part of telenovelas, it tends to be quick and plot-moving. Violence moves in this game simulate someone striking quickly without thought, mostly because they are angry. Like in most telenovelas, violence in **Pasión** is brief, bloodless, and quickly shaken off. Sometimes, though, it leads to questions of whether or not someone has died!

Reality in the Show

These ashcan rules of **Pasión de las Pasiones** assume a more or less realistic world with the greatest magic being love between two people and the craziest technology being intensive plastic surgery. These rules won't give you anything specific to go outside of that, though there's really nothing stopping you from moving away from the mold. I'm not at your table! But if your charming heiress has mind control, it may shortcut some of the drama.

On the other hand, what is presented on screen isn't always what really happened. Several of the moves (especially Flashback moves, page 23) work with redefining the truth that was previously established in play. Consider smoke and mirrors to explain why what you believed was the truth may now be shown to be a lie!

Challenging the Archetypes

If all of this is feeling really constricting, don't worry. You don't have to do things exactly the same way. While telenovelas come from a history of propping up the wealthier class and sticking with "traditional values", this is increasingly changing with telenovelas featuring political causes and progress.

On that same line, don't feel constrained in who you can tell these stories about. While the playbooks have gendered prepositions this is solely because it's very difficult to avoid doing that with Spanish and does not indicate that you must fit a character of that gender or even that your character must fit into binary views of gender! Romance and betrayal will work just as well changing gender and sexuality with any of the playbooks!



Chapter 2: Characters

Pasión de las Pasiones has a variety of telenovela archetypes called playbooks. Each playbook gives you an idea of where your character fits into the show but leaves the details up to you. Is your **Jefe** a drug lord who rose up from a poor beginning to save her mother from poverty or the patriarch of a large and corrupt family of rich oligarchs? It's up to you! The playbooks included are **La Belleza**, **El Caballero**, **La Doña**, **La Empleada**, **El Gemelo**, and **El Jefe**. See page 27. for more on playbooks.

Name, Look, and Props

When you pick up a playbook, start by choosing a name either from the list of names provided or come up with one yourself. You may want a last name, especially if someone else is going to be a family member of yours.

Next, think about what your character looks like. Tell us about the things that most stand out about them, the things that the producer always highlights, the things that most make them beautiful. This isn't necessarily just their best traits, it's the traits that are key to who they are. If you want, expand beyond just a couple looks; the more you know about how they look, the easier you'll find it to describe them letting out a single tear with their hair whipping around their face.

Up next is props, a couple of items or traits that you can use to your advantage. Choose up to three of them from the list; you are assumed to have very easy access to these. Part of this is for narrative purposes, part of it is to get your mind going. If you'd like something else, talk with your GM. As long as it's within the idea of the playbook, you can probably go for it.

Your Question

Most of the time when you make a move, it will tell you to 'roll with the questions' and list a couple of questions (more on page 13). Before you make the roll, you will ask (out loud) the two questions, answering each of them with 'yes' or 'no.' For each yes, you'll add a +1. For each no, you don't add anything.

You'll also be rolling your playbook question, a yes or no question that encourages playing to the tropes of the playbook. This also can give either a +1 or a +0. Keep it in mind--it gives you some ideas on how your character should act!

This Time On

To make sure that your telenovela kicks off on an appropriately dramatic and bombastic note, each playbook also has a prompt called "This Time On," simple questions designed to get your character going with an immediate goal. Answer the question and share as much of it as you would like to share.

In the fiction, this should be understood to have been set up in previous episodes; remember that you're dropping into the middle of the show! We want each episode you play to have a lot of moving parts, action, and dramatics!

Audience Reaction

Every playbook has a unique audience reaction that describes how that PC gains experience. For more on audience reactions and experience, see page 14.

Picking Your Moves

Under the Moves section, pick one or two moves as directed. The moves you choose focus your character. If you choose ***Such a Bad Child*** and ***Tell Me Everything***, you're showing **La Doña's** nurturing side; if you choose ***Was Beautiful Once*** and ***Tell Epifanio***, you're showing your teeth.

Introductions and Relationships

When everyone is done filling in their playbooks and working out who they are, it's time to connect everyone. Go around the table and introduce your characters one at a time. The GM--and probably the other players--will be asking you lots of questions to get to know your character and fill in some blanks, but don't feel like you have to cover everything. That's why we've got flashbacks.

Finally, go around the table again and fill in relationships. Fill in the name of another character into each blank space and answer any questions connected to it.

Final Notes

As you've made your characters, you may have introduced new places or relationships. Talk about those, work them out as a group. Write name cards if you're using them and get ready. The introduction's playing and you're ready to dive in.





Chapter 3: Playing the Game

As you write this story, everyone around the table is going to be roleplaying: speaking as their character, saying what they do, and describing how they feel. That's going to mean sharing the spotlight. This telenovela is an ensemble show; everyone should take turns being the focus, talking and listening, being a good audience member and a good character, and adding details to keep the narrative flowing.

The rules especially come in during moments of uncertainty, like when Ignacio tries to express his feelings to Marta without letting her mother realize it, as a way to give a clear path in where the story goes. The individual pieces of rules that we use in this moment are called moves. Moves are only used when there is a question of dramatics and uncertainty; when you are doing things you do routinely or without narrative tension, there's no need to trigger a move.

That word 'trigger' is an important one; in order for a roll to happen, something specific has to happen in the narrative first. Usually the first part of the move will tell you what that is, when you *do something specific*... You can't swap triggers for different moves, and you can't make a move without doing the trigger first.

.....
*Jeff is playing Ernesto, El Jefe, and he wants to put the pressure on Rico, a rival hotel owner, to make a real estate grab. He shows up at the hotel and tells Erin, the GM, that he grabs Rico by the lapels and growls real low in his face to remove his bid for the land in question. Erin points out that Ernesto is **demanding what he deserves** and she has Jeff roll to see whether Rico caves.*
.....

Answering Questions and Rolling Dice

If a move asks you to roll, you roll two six-sided dice (2d6) and add the results together. The move will also have two yes or no questions. For each yes, add +1 to your roll. Additionally, you'll always be asking and answering your playbook question with a yes or no, again adding +1 for a yes. This means your roll (before outside interference) can add between +0 and +3 to the two dice.

.....
*Jess is playing Elena, La Empleada, and is trying to **express her love passionately** to the son of a major drug dealer who has caught her eye, and perhaps her heart. She checks the questions which are 'Are you dressed to impress?' and 'Are you known to be single?' and answers yes twice; she's single (+1) and dressed to impress (+1). She also answers her playbook question, 'Are you in over your head?' Rodrigo's a pretty scary guy, that's another +1. She rolls 2d6 and gets a 6, then adds the +3 from her questions making it a 9. Jess and the MC look to the move to see what happens on a 7-9.*
.....

The maximum bonus you can have on any die roll is +4, including all possible questions. Leverage spent to add +1 to your rolls (see page 16) doesn't count for that maximum.

When you do roll for a move, there are three possibilities:

- ♥ On a 10+, you've got a full hit.
- ♥ On a 7-9, you're looking at a partial hit.
- ♥ On a 6-, you've rolled a miss.

With a single exception, you want to roll high when you make a move. The move will tell you what happens next, sometimes with a choice and interpretation from another player or the GM. On a 10+, you get most of what you want. On a 7-9, you get what you want, but at a cost or with an added complication or downside. On a 6-, things have gotten away from you and the MC will tell you how, though the actual consequences may fall on the shoulders of another player.

The only person at the table not rolling dice is the GM. The GM instead reacts to the actions of the players and describes what happens. If there's disagreement about any rules, they also handle making a call. They have their own set of moves that trigger for golden opportunities or on rolled misses, but these don't take a die roll and are described more on page 41.

The Audience

In previous chapters, I've described the players as filling in the role of the audience watching the show. They function in two ways, making decisions and providing audience reactions. Either way, any players that aren't in the current scene are the audience at that moment.

Although there are thousands of people watching your telenovela, we focus in on a single couch of people, a family of five sitting down to watch their favorite show. Any time a player isn't in a scene as their character, they take on the role of the audience. Players aren't assigned to any particular member of the family, but can react as any of them. It just can help to remember who you are most playing towards!

Audience Reactions

At any point during play, a player who isn't in a scene may react as a member of the audience to one of the players. Each of the playbooks has an audience reaction that all players should be aware of. This audience reaction gives the player something to aim for, the kind of response they should be trying to evoke from the people watching.

When a player receives an audience reaction, they mark experience. A player cannot receive more than one experience mark in a single scene, though they may evoke gasps or shouts at any time! See page 26 for more on experience.

.....
*John is playing Chavez, **El Caballero**, and is talking with Liliana, **La Belleza**, in a car that he's rented with the last of his crumpled money. When they arrive at the destination, he jumps out of the car quickly, opens her door, and helps her delicately out, ruining his fine boots in the process. Brendan isn't in this scene, but he thinks that's very dashing, so he lets out a lovelorn sigh, leaning on his hand and batting his eyelashes. John marks experience for Chavez, because the teenage girl in the audience just fell in love.*
.....

Audience Decisions

When the audience must make a decision because of a move, the other players will talk amongst themselves and make the call. If they cannot agree, the PC in the spotlight will choose one audience member to make the final decision. This should be viewed as the overall audience reaction and not focused on any particular person sitting on the couch!

Stress

Rather than having a harm clock (like in **Apocalypse World**), **Pasión de las Pasiones** characters have a stress track that measures the amount of tension and effort that they have expelled. Stress can be suffered when facing adversity or struggling past negative consequences. The GM may also assign stress based on a missed roll (see GM moves).

The stress track has seven boxes, marked one at a time. As you hit stress thresholds (at 2, 4, 5, and 6) in your track, you receive modifiers to the basic moves.

At stress levels 2 and 5, you receive a negative condition, your choice of Distracted (which gives you a -2 to **process your feelings** and **spot something suspicious**) or Frazzled (-2 to **express love passionately** and **demand what you deserve**). If you choose Distracted at 2, you must choose Frazzled at 5 and vice versa.

At stress levels 4 and 6, you receive a positive condition, your choice of Rageful (which gives you a +1 to **strike out with voice or violence**) or Bitter (+1 to **accuse someone of lying**). If you choose Rageful at 4, you must choose Bitter at 6 and vice versa.

If you drop back below a threshold you lose one of the conditions (your choice), and if you go back over it you can once again choose from the available conditions.

Stress Thresholds

Mark one at 2 stress and 5 stress	Mark one at 4 stress and 6 stress
Distracted (-2 process feelings, spot something)	Rageful (+1 strike out)
Frazzled (-2 express love, demand deserved)	Bitter (+1 accuse someone of lying)

For moves that refer to "number of stress thresholds passed," you receive a +1 at 2 stress, a +2 at 4 stress, a +3 at 5 stress, and a +4 at 6 stress. These moves are **flashback to reveal a shocking truth** and **face certain death**. For **flashback to reveal a shocking truth**, having more stress thresholds past is best, so be sure to manage your stress level when you want to move things! On the other hand, **facing certain death** at high stress is a good way to end up putting your fate in the hands of your greatest rival.

7+ Stress: Meltdown

When things become too much to manage, you Meltdown. If you overfill your stress track (and would mark your 8th stress), instead clear your stress down to zero and choose an option from the list. Meltdowns—while excellent for ratings—put you into a bad spot. Do your best to manage your stress levels!

When you would mark an 8th stress, choose one and clear all your stress:

- ♥ Confess your greatest sins; give everyone Leverage over you.
- ♥ Break down emotionally and reveal your greatest weakness; burn your Leverage over all other characters.
- ♥ You *get taken out*; the GM will tell you how.

If you choose to confess your greatest sins, you have a chance to admit all of your wrongdoings and maybe do a bit of grandstanding. Just because you're "confessing" doesn't mean you can't revel in it. If you break down emotionally and reveal your greatest weakness, you show that you are weak and human as the camera zooms in—possibly giving you a chance for an award-winning performance! If you get taken out, it may mean you faint, the police drag you away, or you run sobbing from the room. Only one thing is for sure: it won't be good.

Leverage

Leverage is a measure of one character's emotional control and understanding of another. It doesn't need to be tied to any particular event; it represents the strings of control one person holds over another. This Leverage can be spent by several moves (especially Flashback moves) or used to get an immediate effect. Leverage can be spent one-for-one in the following ways:

- ♥ Add +1 (after the roll) to a roll made against the person who owes you Leverage (max 1 per roll)
- ♥ Inflict -1 (before the roll) for each point of Leverage spent before this person rolls against you (max 3 per roll)
- ♥ Force a moment of hesitation for you to get a word in

Adding to your roll against the person you have Leverage over represents your ability to understand them and take advantage of this knowledge you hold. This allows you to bump a miss up to a hit or to lose a complication, but you can only spend 1 point of Leverage this way per roll.

Subtracting from their roll represents your ability to predict their actions and to use your sheer social control over them to make them stumble. This must be spent before the roll is made, but you can spend up to 3 Leverage on a single roll.

Forcing a moment of hesitation is just enough to get a little something in: bursting out your feelings, grabbing their arm, throwing wine, ducking back. It's just a moment and it doesn't stop them, it just slows things for a second.

Basic Moves

These are the moves that will likely be happening most often, pushing the narrative forward. Included beneath each move is a brief explanation of how it triggers and what comes next.

Demand What You Deserve

When you ***demand what you deserve***, roll with the questions

- ♥ *Are you offering something of value in return?*
- ♥ *Do they love you in this moment?*

On a hit, the target of your demand chooses one (if targeting an NPC, the GM chooses). On a 10+, remove one of their options and they choose one from the remaining:

- ♥ They concede to your will; they can clear a stress or you owe them Leverage, their choice.
- ♥ They escalate and deny you; they mark stress.
- ♥ They weasel out of it; they owe you Leverage.
- ♥ They run away; you can take something from them.

You spent the last six months tracking down a note your mother wrote that shows that you aren't the rightful heir to her fortune. Trouble is, somebody else got to it first and now you need to get it from them. So you go, confront them, and demand it be given to you right away. This could be seductively playing with their jacket buttons or shaking them by their lapels, but it's making it clear that you want something they have and they should give it to you.

The questions for this move ask why they may be willing to give you something. Perhaps you're offering a deal that they can use to justify their giving in, but they're still doing you a favor. And we all do crazy things for people we love.

On a hit, you've put a good amount of pressure on them and they're not getting away from this without giving something up. They get to choose if they give it to you, but if they do they're going to clear stress or have more control over you in the future. If they don't, they're going to suffer some consequences: stress, owing Leverage, or you getting to take something from them. If you rolled a 10+, you remove one of their choices so they are more likely to choose what you would like them to.

Express Your Love Passionately

When you *express your love passionately*, roll with the questions

- ♥ *Are you dressed to impress?*
- ♥ *Do they believe that you are single?*

On a 7-9, your target chooses one. On a 10+, they choose two:

- ♥ Give themselves to you.
- ♥ Reveal a secret they probably shouldn't.
- ♥ Mark off stress to conceal their feelings.
- ♥ Give you Leverage and show you how you reached them.

Sometimes you don't want something from someone, you just want someone. In this case, you're *expressing your love passionately*. Note that passionately part: this doesn't trigger by casually telling someone you are involved with that you like them. This is for expressions of love, lust, desire, and--dare I say it?--*passion*. It may look like a proposal in a park, closely holding someone while dancing, or sobbing out your love through tears.

Dressed to impress doesn't necessarily mean black tie, but it does mean something that will catch the eye. If everyone in your show is always elegant, this may raise the bar a bit, but it may just mean everyone's always ready to express their love.

If you are dating, married, or publicly fooling around with somebody else—but they don't know you are—it still counts for not being known to be involved. It is a little harder to believe someone only lives for you when they're with someone else!

On a hit, they are going to choose how they react to you, but on a 10+ they're going to choose 2:

- ♥ If they give themselves to you, this should be immediate and clear; leaving their date holding a wilted rose as they jump onto the back of your motorcycle, falling into your arms in a closet, saying everything they've always wanted to hear.
- ♥ If they reveal a secret, perhaps it's related to why they can't be with you, perhaps not; it just bubbles to the surface.
- ♥ If they choose to mark stress or give Leverage, they're holding themselves back, but you'll still have further sway over them in the future.

Strike Out At Someone

When you ***strike out at someone with voice or violence***, roll with the questions

- ♥ *Have you caught them off guard?*
- ♥ *Have they just wronged you?*

On a hit, you inflict 2 stress but give them 1 Leverage by showing your feelings. On a 7-9, choose 1. On a 10+, choose 2:

- ♥ You cut them deeply; inflict 1 additional stress.
- ♥ You take something from them.
- ♥ You leave with your dignity intact; cancel the Leverage you gave them.
- ♥ You revel in causing pain; clear 1 stress.

When things get bad enough and you've faced enough loss of face, it may be time to really dig your claws in. Perhaps you've been wronged for the last time. Maybe you're just lashing out at an unfair world. Either way your aim is to hurt. You're not trying to get something necessarily; you want them to remember this.

Nobody is at their best when caught by surprise, so use that to your advantage. Just as importantly, if someone wrongs you, that's the perfect time to have the audience at your back.

On a hit, you're upping their stress which makes them closer to a full on emotional meltdown. Maybe it'll pay off and they'll be afraid to wrong you again, maybe they'll come back at you, but for now you get them good. If you cut them deeply, you can make the stress a little worse. If they've got something in their hand or on their person, you can take something from them, or maybe you can make yourself feel a little better. But if you don't choose to leave with your dignity intact, you showed your hand emotionally and they'll have a little bit of edge on you.

Accuse Someone of Lying

When you **accuse someone of lying to their face**, roll with the questions

- ♥ *Do you have an audience?*
- ♥ *Do you have evidence?*

On a 7-9, choose 2. On a 10+, choose 3:

- ♥ You are right.
- ♥ They admit their falsehood or mark off stress (their choice).
- ♥ They're surprised, scared, or flustered; they must act with desperation before they can act against you.
- ♥ Free yourself from their grip, remove 1 Leverage from you.

Telenovelas feature too much lying for there to be a move about lying. Instead, we roll the dice when someone accuses someone else of lying. This isn't for insinuation, this is for flat out accusations: “¡Mentirosa!”

If you have some people around to enjoy the scene, that gives you an advantage; the audience loves a big public display. A bit of evidence also doesn't hurt; if you can throw something in their face, it'll make it easier to prove your point.

This move can change some previously established facts. If you choose 'You are right' then, well, you are. There may be previous evidence that you aren't, but you are right! If you force them to admit, it'll cost them stress to talk their way out of it. If you decide they are flustered, they cannot make overt moves against you unless they first roll act with desperation; that means no striking back.

Act With Desperation

When you **act with desperation**, tell the MC what situation you want to avoid, and roll with the questions

- ♥ *Are you doing this for love?*
- ♥ *Are you doing this for vengeance?*

On a 10+, all's well. On a 7-9, the MC will give you a worse outcome or an ugly choice.

The evil Generalísimo is taking away your love in his yacht; this is your last chance to get him in cuffs. Running down to the docks, seeing a wet pier stretching before you, a boat pushing off? Your jump is an act of desperation.

Doing it for love is flexible: love of family, romantic love, or love for a dear friend all fit. Love of your own skin won't cut it—this is for someone else. Doing it for vengeance is all for you. Not justice, not law. Just cold hard revenge.

On a hit, you made it. What you were trying to avoid is avoided. On a 10+, you managed it, but just barely. On a 7-9, you make it, but it's going to cost you.

Spot Something Out of Place

When you try to spot something out of place in a social interaction or someone's personal space, roll with questions

- ♥ *Have you been intimate with this person recently?*
- ♥ *Are you free of other distractions?*

On a 7-9, ask 1. On a 10+, ask 2. Either way, take +1 forward when acting on this information.

- ♥ How does your character feel about _____?
- ♥ What are you planning?
- ♥ How could I get your character to _____?
- ♥ What do you have of value or use?
- ♥ What's your character hoping to get from _____?

The gentleman in the red cravat is standing very close to your long-lost twin, seemingly just in conversation but for what purpose? You sidle forward, find a place where you can lean comfortably and peer over your glass at them. Perhaps you'll spot something now, but if not, well... you can always search her office later.

If you've been intimate with someone, you "get" them a little better. Recently probably means this episode, but it may be longer. The GM will help you choose or they may signal it. Intimate can mean a lot of things--remember the emotional side as well.

Free of distractions may be you concentrating specifically. If you are in another conversation you're not free of distractions, especially if someone is really putting the charms on you. If the room is crowded and full of dancing people, that's also very distracting. Think of it this way: if you paying attention to the target is making it hard to do something else, you are distracted.

The information you get from this should be honest--leave the lies for in-character questions. The +1 forward helps you take this knowledge and act immediately on it; don't get the information and let it lie.

Process Your Feelings Out Loud

When you *process your feelings out loud*, ask each member of the audience if they are rooting for you, each one giving you a +1 or +0 (max +3), and roll. On a hit, choose 1. Take +1 ongoing while following up on this information.

- ♥ The audience reveals a crucial event going on outside of view.
- ♥ The audience tells you how you might find love with a partner of their choosing.
- ♥ The audience tells you how you might get _____ to _____.

On a 10+, set the scene where you follow that information immediately.

Sometimes things just get to be too much, rain spatters against the window and you are trapped by circumstance. Looking out the window, you think and you wonder, you speak aloud your love and your pain. At home, the audience leans forward to see the tears go down your beautiful face. Then it dawns on you: you know what to do.

If the audience wants nice things for you, you'll get their vote and their +1. If you play up your emotions, that'll probably help. If there are more than 3 players, you still can't end up with more than a +3. When in doubt with a high number of players, you choose 4 that you ask; you're playing to their demographic.

On a 10+, you get to start the scene as hard as you want. If you learned your love is getting married, feel free to set yourself in a scene right before the wedding or even at "any objections?" On a 7-9, you may get there, but it could be too late; you get the information you want but no head start on using it.

Flashback Moves

Eduardo's goons have chased you into the kitchen. Your eyes go to a knife. The audience is on the edge of their seat as they see a single drop of sweat go down your forehead. Then you smile, reach under the table, and...*flashback!*

Earlier that day, you sneak into the kitchen with a folded newspaper wrapped around something heavy. A glance back and forth and you tape the gun under a counter. This way if things go south with Eduardo, you'll be ready. The audience heaves a sigh of relief. Unfortunately, the flashback ends with the familiar clacking and red soles of Carmen's stilettos. When you go for the gun, there's only a note taped where it should be: *This is for Argentina.*

An integral part of telenovelas is the flashback. Flashbacks reveal information, tell us more about characters, but most importantly they reshape our understanding of situations. When your character has some deal, preparation, or a revelation to make, the show flashes back to show the truth of what happened. Flashbacks should be kept short and punchy—you don't want the flashback to become the full show!

Flashbacks are powerful; they often rewrite previously established facts and allow players to set the scene...so they have a cost. Players must spend Leverage or stress in order to use any of the flashback moves. This limits their frequency and shows that they take some narrative teeth.

Flash Back to a Deal

When you ***flash back to a deal you made with someone***, spend 1-3 Leverage you hold over them and roll + Leverage spent. On a hit, flash back to the moment when you made the deal. On a 10+, you do both. On a 7-9, choose 1; your partner in the deal does the other:

- ♥ Say what they promised.
- ♥ Say what you promised.

On a miss, they describe both or they describe how they have used the deal to set a trap for you right now.

On a hit, you are setting the scene and some of the stakes. With a 10+, you're really able to define the whole day; it's up to your partner to justify why they made the deal. On a 7-9, they describe first and you describe second. The person who rolled will be making the choice, so choose the one that helps you more!

On a 6-, they can turn it on you as if they got a 10+, or perhaps they did something sneaky like attaching a tracking device to that handsome attaché they just handed to you.

If this move is made toward an NPC, the GM will play them for the brief scene.

Flash Back to Preparations

When you *flash back to a time you made preparations*, spend 1-3 stress and roll + stress spent. Choose one, and tell the GM what it was:

- ♥ You have fabricated a piece of evidence.
- ♥ You arranged for somebody to be in the right place at the right time.
- ♥ You stowed away something hidden.

On a hit, you pulled it off. On a 10+, take +1 forward when acting on this. On a miss, you thought you did it, but the GM reveals who was lurking in the background. The lurker tells us what they did to interfere as the flashback ends.

You can spend up to 3 stress to help you put everything into place to your advantage; you've been working behind the scenes to make this happen. You cannot spend stress in this way to a Meltdown—you must end up at 7 stress or below.

Reveal a Shocking Truth

When you *flash back to reveal a shocking truth about another PC*, spend three Leverage you hold over them and roll plus stress thresholds marked. On a hit, the news is staggering; before acting against you, they must **act with desperation** with a -2 forward. On a 7-9, choose 1. On a 10+, choose 2:

- ♥ You have unequivocal evidence this is true.
- ♥ The shocking truth gives you rightful claim to something they value.
- ♥ You introduce a shocking new character who has your back.

On a miss, it blows up in your face--mark 3 stress.

You roll with the number of stress thresholds you have marked (+1 to +4; see page 15 for more on stress thresholds) and have to spend a full 3 Leverage. This is an investment in something big and works best when you are pushed to the very brink. On the other hand, a miss will make you mark 3 stress, so if you're on that edge, expect to Meltdown if it doesn't work. Either way, this is a pivotal moment.

On a hit, you've put them in such a position that they can't retaliate and trying to do so will probably just dig them into a deeper hole than they were. Additionally, you're going to be able to introduce something definite.

If you have unequivocal evidence, there's nothing that can be done to disprove what you're throwing in their face. This does come with the implication it is true—it should be very difficult if not impossible for someone to reverse this moment, though obviously it may be more complicated than you are making it seem.

If you have a rightful claim to something they value, be sure to tell us what that is and why you have the rightful claim. Rightful claim means that the law will back you up; it doesn't mean that you necessarily have full control of it now. It does put

you into a position that if you get that law support (for example, by introducing a new character who has your back!) you're going to be sitting behind their desk.

If you introduce a shocking character, tell us who they are and be sure to give a big dramatic intro. This could easily be a secret family member, a spy, a private eye, a detective, a lawyer, someone back from the dead, a mysterious lover--it's somebody who nobody expected to arrive who is ready to support you.

Face Certain Death

This isn't a dungeon crawler, so don't expect to be wading through your slayed enemies. However, when passions burn, things can go horribly wrong. Whether it's a shot in a dark garden or a coffee cup filled with cyanide, telenovela characters face horrible certain death all the time. This doesn't mean that you're rolling to face certain death every time things get dangerous, just when there's no way that somebody could get out of this.

When you **face certain death**, roll + the number of stress thresholds passed. On a miss, your death was less certain than we thought; tell us about your daring escape. On a 7-9, you choose one from the list. On a 10+, the audience chooses 1 from the list. When an option is chosen, it is crossed off and nobody may choose it again.

- ♥ Someone saves you just in time; you owe them 3 Leverage.
- ♥ One of your props takes the hit; lose it immediately.
- ♥ Take a distinctive, but sexy scar.
- ♥ Gain a permanent debility (a limp, an eyepatch, etc.)
- ♥ Become a twisted, evil version of yourself.
- ♥ Suffer amnesia.
- ♥ Return with a new face.
- ♥ Wind up in a (possibly) long term coma.
- ♥ Wind up actually dead; this option may be picked multiple times.

.....
Ronaldo has been tricking and seducing, lying and manipulating, and basically leaving everybody angry. As he leaves his mansion at Bonita Vida Cliffs, he finds that Esmerelda cut the brake lines on his shiny red sports car. He gets a chance to act with desperation, but that miss sends him careening off the cliff to the jagged rocks below. There's no way he's walking away from that one, so he faces certain death.

His stress level is up (4 stress!) after the argument with Esmerelda, so he's rolling with a +2 on this roll that he wants to get low on. He gets a 9 on his roll (ouch) plus the 2 and that puts him in the audience's hands. The audience looks at the options. Maria already got an eyepatch and Cesar was already saved

at the last moment, but what would really throw a wrench in things is a bout of amnesia. They cross that off, and Ronaldo will stumble back into town in a ripped shirt and jacket with no memory of who he is.

That should give all of his spurned lovers a chance for some revenge...

.....

The list of options available for this move are shared between all players and are crossed off; we don't want everyone to have amnesia nor do we want a table of evil twisted versions of all characters. Death's the exception, though always ask whether it would be more interesting to choose something else.

When you return is mostly up to you; often the best time is when nobody expects it.

Experience and Advancement

With all of this action and change constantly swirling around your characters, we can't have them not changing in some way! There is a series of five checkboxes on your playbook labeled experience. When you fill those five boxes (hopefully in pencil!), erase the filled in marks, and choose an advance! Advances represent ways that your character has become more involved with new plots and themes, possibly getting new moves or changing how their other moves work.

You mark for experience when you get an audience reaction, but only once per scene. If **El Caballero** is being an absolute dreamboat and gets a lovelorn sigh, he marks once. If two seconds later he becomes even more dreamy, well, he already got that reaction.

If you are definitely playing a one shot or a convention game, consider starting all players at 3 marked experience. It will let them get something new and special quickly!

When you advance, you either take another one of your playbook moves, or you take a playbook move from another playbook. Choosing these moves work exactly like choosing moves for character creation—check off the box or write it in on your sheet or a notecard if it's from another playbook.



Chapter 4: The Playbooks

All of that is well and good, but who are you at the table? That's why we've got playbooks! Below are the six ashcan playbooks with all of the fictional details, stats, and moves you need to play. The names of the playbooks are gendered with how they most frequently show up in telenovelas, but there is no reason you can't have **El Don**, **La Jefe**, or **El Empleado**!

- ♥ **La Belleza (The Beauty)**—Beautiful, poised, and oh-so cold. La Belleza controls the hearts and minds of those around her by catching eyes and twisting people around her little finger. (page 28)
- ♥ **El Caballero (The Gentleman)**—Focused, vengeful, and totally straightforward. El Caballero finds himself surrounded by plots and injustices...and he is there to stop them. (page 30)
- ♥ **La Doña (The Matriarch)**—Wise, connected, and manipulative. La Doña wraps webs around everyone she touches, in service of those around her but always taking a slice for herself. (page 32)
- ♥ **La Empleada (The Employee)**—Innocent, graceful, and starry-eyed. La Empleada comes into a world of wealth with nothing but her beauty and will to protect her. (page 34)
- ♥ **El Gemelo (The Twin)**—Devious, charming, and hidden. El Gemelo lives two lives; their own and that of their twin. (page 36)
- ♥ **El Jefe (The Boss)**—Controlling, brutal, and dangerous. El Jefe runs things with an iron fist and velvet glove, charming and handsome as a shark. (page 38)

La Belleza (The Beauty)

Choose a Name:

Constanza, Marcela, Soraya, Regina, Verónica, Violeta

Your Question:

Are you the center of attention?

Look:

What are two things people notice about you?

Choose up to 3 props:

<input type="checkbox"/> A dress that matches the room	<input type="checkbox"/> Designer heels
<input type="checkbox"/> A finely appointed apartment	<input type="checkbox"/> A driver who handles things
<input type="checkbox"/> A pair of big sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/> A stylist always on call
<input type="checkbox"/> A decorated fan	<input type="checkbox"/> The best seat in a restaurant
<input type="checkbox"/> A dog in a purse	<input type="checkbox"/> Access to every exclusive club

Relationships:

_____ has seen you cry. What was it about?

_____ has been immune to your charms. So far.

This Time On:

You have something valuable that you need to offload. What is it?

Audience Reaction:

Mark experience when a family member whistles in appreciation of your beauty.

Moves: (Choose two to start)

Big Entrance

When you enter a scene, burn a Leverage to force someone to obviously stare at you and act with desperation before acting against you. If they roll a 7-9, instead of the MC telling them the cost/complication/whatever, you take something from them or take Leverage back, your choice. If they miss, you get both instead of the MC making a move.

Ice Queen

When you reject someone immediately after *expressing your love passionately*, clear 1 stress or take Leverage over them.

Up, Boy

When you rile someone up while remaining aloof, add the question 'Are you physically touching them?' to *express your love passionately*.

Hard to pin down

When someone tries to express their love to you, accuses you of lying, or tries to spot something out of place, you can interfere. Roll with the questions

♥ *Are they being cruel?*

♥ *Are you in public?*

On a hit, they take a -2 on their roll. On a 10+, you also take Leverage over them or clear a stress. On a miss, they get a 10+ no matter what they rolled and you give them Leverage.

El Caballero (The Gentleman)

Choose a Name:

Alvaro, Domingo, Jose, Lorenzo, Mariano, Miguel

Your Question:

Are you handling things head-on and without guile?

Look:

What are two things people notice about you?

Choose up to 3 props:

<input type="checkbox"/> The local bar	<input type="checkbox"/> Your abuelo's sailboat
<input type="checkbox"/> A job with the police	<input type="checkbox"/> A horse or motorcycle
<input type="checkbox"/> A contact you don't want	<input type="checkbox"/> An old photograph
<input type="checkbox"/> A safe place for one person	<input type="checkbox"/> A suit you don't wear
<input type="checkbox"/> A gun you hate to use	<input type="checkbox"/> A kind of hot scar

Relationships:

You got in a big fight with _____. Tell us about it.

_____ knows you from a time you were different. Were you more civil or more wild?

This Time On:

You're here to right a wrong. Someone has broken laws, either yours or society's.

Who are they, what have they done, and what are you going to do about it?

Audience Reaction:

Mark experience when the teenage girl in the audience falls in love just a little.

Moves: (Choose two)

Take A Stand

When you step in to defend someone, roll with the questions

- ♥ *Are you trying to impress them?*
- ♥ *Is the law being broken?*

On a 7-9, hold 1. On a 10+, hold 3. While you stand in their defense, spend hold 1 for 1 to:

- ♥ Protect them from an attack; take the stress instead of them.
- ♥ Keep someone from leaving a room unless they go through you.
- ♥ Take +1 on striking out with violence.

On a miss, you show your hand too soon; you're at their mercy, and the aggressor can inflict stress on you or the target.

Grand Gesture

When you **express your love passionately** with a grand romantic gesture, they choose 1 more option from the list, even on a miss.

For Your Protection

When you are accused of lying, mark 1 stress to subtract 2 from their roll if their accusation would put someone under your protection in danger.

Size Up

When you try to spot something out of place, ask this question, even on a miss:

- ♥ Where is the nearest weapon?

La Doña (The Matriarch)

Choose a Name:

Altargracia, Anjélica, Bernarda, Camila, Carimina, Graciela, Valencia

Your Question:

Is this in service of somebody else?

Look:

What are two things people notice about you?

Choose up to 3 props:

<input type="checkbox"/> A beautiful mansion	<input type="checkbox"/> A car with a driver
<input type="checkbox"/> A cigarette holder	<input type="checkbox"/> A pet dog or cat
<input type="checkbox"/> A full phonebook	<input type="checkbox"/> A glass of fine wine
<input type="checkbox"/> A surprisingly full purse	<input type="checkbox"/> A power hairdo
<input type="checkbox"/> Tons of jewelry	<input type="checkbox"/> A country club membership

Relationships:

You gave some heavy advice to _____. Tell us whether it worked out and how you benefited either way.

You and _____ have sparred with each other for a long time. What do you have on them?

This Time On:

You are in a position to make a sweeping business deal. Whom have you been grooming to help you along?

Audience Reaction:

Mark experience when the teenage daughter rolls her eyes at your meddling.

Moves: (Choose two)

Was Beautiful Once

When you *flashback to a time you mixed business with pleasure*, spend 1 to 3 Leverage and roll + Leverage spent. On a 7-9, they choose one. On a 10+, they choose 2:

- ♥ They gave themselves to you and you have proof.
- ♥ You extracted damning evidence of a crime.
- ♥ They are still besotted with you; they burn their Leverage over you and give you 1 Leverage.

On a miss, choose options as though the move was made against you with a 10+.

Such a Bad Child

When you use someone's shame in order to manipulate them into doing something that benefits you, add +1 to your roll.

Tell Me Everything

When you offer to take the burden of someone's guilt, ask them if they choose to accept or reject your help. If they accept, they clear 1 stress and you gain 2 Leverage over them. If they don't, they burn 1 Leverage.

Tell Epifanio...

When you ask for someone to meet you over the phone or through an intermediary, roll with the questions

- ♥ *Do you know about their past?*
- ♥ *Have you been intimate before?*

On a hit, they agree to meet you to discuss things in good faith. On a 7-9, choose 1. On a 10+, choose 2:

- ♥ They come alone.
- ♥ You can bring backup.
- ♥ They bring what you tell them to.
- ♥ You don't need to bring them anything.

On a miss, they agree to meet you, but they have control of when, where, and how.

La Empleada (The Employee)

Choose a Name:

Aurora, Betty, Blanca, Jane, Maria, Reina, Rocio, Xiomara

Your Question:

Are you in over your head?

Look:

What are two things people notice about you (besides your subdued beauty)?

Choose up to 3 props:

<input type="checkbox"/> Your little servant's room	<input type="checkbox"/> An incriminating letter
<input type="checkbox"/> A surprisingly slinky dress	<input type="checkbox"/> A rotating cast of flowers
<input type="checkbox"/> A cart full of chemicals	<input type="checkbox"/> A creative thing you love
<input type="checkbox"/> A big jingly keyring	<input type="checkbox"/> A flowery diary
<input type="checkbox"/> An empty bank account	<input type="checkbox"/> An unloaded pistol

Relationships:

You had a very close brush of romance with _____. We're talking eyes meet, slow lean in, lips almost... Why did it stall?

This goes deeper than you'd realized... You caught _____ and _____ in a moment of plotting. What were they planning?

This Time On:

You overheard talk, in the finery or the barrio, that someone you love is in mortal danger. Who is the threat and how can you stop it?

Audience Reaction:

Mark experience when abuela says, "Pobrecita..."

FEATURE: Your Suitors

Choose 2 people (ideally player characters) to be your Suitors; they are actively courting you, even if you're already in a relationship. At the beginning of play, choose 1 to be your Love.

_____ ♥ _____ ♥

Take +1 ongoing with your Love when you are acting to strengthen the relationship.

When you share intimacy or feelings with the other Suitor, mark them as your Love and remove the mark from the previous Love. If you triggered the intimacy, clear 1 stress. If they triggered the intimacy, they take Leverage over you.

Any time that you leave a Suitor, you can break the ties with them (erase their name) and choose someone else to take their place.

Moves: (Choose one)

Keys to the Castle

When you are going about your business and happen to overhear something, roll with the questions

- ♥ *Do you work here?*
- ♥ *Are you dressed to blend in?*

On a hit, you get away, but someone saw you; pick who and give them Leverage. On a 10+, you got away without being spotted, or you can ask the conspirators a followup question, your choice. On a miss, you stumble, knock something over, or otherwise reveal yourself. You're in the thick of it.

Confesión

When you tell someone of your wrongdoings, roll with the questions

- ♥ *Do you view the other as pure of heart?*
- ♥ *Do you invoke religion or family?*

On a hit, clear 1 stress and give them 1 Leverage. On a 7-9, choose 1. On a 10+, choose 2:

- ♥ You unburden yourself; clear an extra stress.
- ♥ You beg their forgiveness; if they give it to you, they clear 1 stress.
- ♥ You hold something back; don't give them Leverage.

On a miss, their image of you is tarnished; they gain 1 Leverage over you, and you must mark 2 stress or lose your Leverage over them.

Bad Side of Town

When you flee from someone to the barrio, roll with the questions

- ♥ *Are you socially beneath them?*
- ♥ *Is there nobody directly stopping you?*

On a 7-9, you get out and choose 1; on a 10+ you get out and choose 2:

- ♥ You get a new prop from your list or something from home.
- ♥ You feel comfort in the dim light; clear 2 stress.
- ♥ Nobody sees where you went; your mystery gives you 1 Leverage over somebody in the scene.

El Gemelo (The Twin)

Before you start making your character, ask the other players if they are willing to be your twin. Choose from among the PCs who agree or work with the MC to find an appropriately important NPC!

Choose a Name Similar To Your Twin's Name:

Your Question:

Are you taking advantage of your twin's reputation?

Look:

What are two things people notice about you?

Choose up to 3 props:

<input type="checkbox"/> Your twin's home	<input type="checkbox"/> A mustache or goatee
<input type="checkbox"/> A fancy black car	<input type="checkbox"/> A photo of both of you
<input type="checkbox"/> Your twin's keys	<input type="checkbox"/> A dashing scarf
<input type="checkbox"/> A hidden basement	<input type="checkbox"/> Two cell phones
<input type="checkbox"/> An evil sneer for the camera	<input type="checkbox"/> A stocked makeup kit

Relationships:

_____ knows you for you. Tell them how they can tell you from your twin.

_____ had an intense moment with you. What was it and do they know it was you?

This Time On:

There is a big event coming up that your twin is supposed to be at. How have you made sure that you will also be there and to what purpose?

Audience Reaction:

Mark experience when the father gets confused about who you are or what you are plotting.

Moves: (Choose two)

Almost The Same

When you **express your love passionately** to someone that your twin loves, treat a 6- as a 7-9, or a 7-9 as a 10+.

Story Spinner

When you coyly attempt to learn about someone while you are pretending to be your twin, roll with the questions

- ♥ *Do they love your twin?*
- ♥ *Is there an ample distraction?*

On a 7-9, hold 1. On a 10+, hold 3. Spend your hold one-for-one to ask any of these questions:

- ♥ When did you and my twin sleep together?
- ♥ How do you feel about my twin?
- ♥ What do you owe my twin?
- ♥ How could I make you angry at my twin?

On a miss, hold 1, but your twin and your target gain 1 Leverage on you.

That Wasn't Me

When someone flashes back to a scene with you or your twin, spend a Leverage over the flashback initiator to switch who it really was.

Twin Tied

When pretending to be your twin, you may spend 1 Leverage they hold over someone as if it was your own. If you do, your twin takes 2 Leverage over you.

El Jefe (The Boss)

Choose a Name:

El Generalísimo, Eladio, Ernesto, Federico, Roberto

Your question:

Are you taking control of this situation?

Look:

What are two things people notice about you?

Choose up to 3 props:

<input type="checkbox"/> Your mansion or business	<input type="checkbox"/> A crazily large pistol
<input type="checkbox"/> A guard with no neck	<input type="checkbox"/> A massive pile of cash
<input type="checkbox"/> A long black limo	<input type="checkbox"/> A big, scary knife
<input type="checkbox"/> A truck full of drugs	<input type="checkbox"/> An eyepatch
<input type="checkbox"/> An old style military uniform	<input type="checkbox"/> A helicopter

Relationships:

_____ used to work for you. How did the relationship break down?

_____ is an object of beauty you want to possess. How have they evaded you?

This Time On:

Some of your extra-legal business is being monitored by the police. What do you have to set up to throw them off your tail?

Audience Reaction:

Mark experience when the abuela gasps in horror at your actions.

Moves (Choose two):

Plata o Plomo

When you **demand what you deserve** and you have the physical upper hand, they take an extra 2 stress if they don't concede to your will.

Bitter Rage

When you mark 4 stress, you get both Rageful and Bitter. When you hit 6 stress, take +1 ongoing to wreak havoc on those who deserve it.

Dangerous Passion

When you angrily express your love, make the roll to **express your love passionately**, but add all the questions for **strike out at someone with voice or violence** to the list. You can have at most a +2 from the four combined questions.

Thugs

You have a small crew ready to enforce your plans, about 4-6 people. Give them names. When you send them to extract pain or money, roll with the questions

- ♥ *Is it an easy job?*
- ♥ *Is the crew in good health?*

On a hit, they show up to rough up your target. On a 7-9, your target chooses 1.

On a 10+, your target chooses 2:

- ♥ Your target gives your crew what you're looking for.
- ♥ The crew beats up your target; your target takes 2 stress.
- ♥ The crew reminds your target where their loyalty ought to lie; your target gives you 1 Leverage.

On a miss, your target avoids the crew and finds proof that they're yours. Tell us what the proof is.



Chapter 5: Producción!

Amid all of the beauty and the glamour, there is someone running the camera and setting up the scenes. That's you, *Producción!*

Agendas

- ♥ Make the drama of the telenovela seem important
- ♥ Twist the players' characters' relationships
- ♥ Play to find out what happens

Above all else, keep the drama and story twisted, high stakes, and passionate. Ask players questions that reveal the holes in their armor, that bring out their emotions, that put doubt into their relationships. If they get too secure in their relationships, challenge them and push them. If **La Empleada** has decided that **El Jefe** isn't so bad, bring in an evil associate of **El Jefe's** from fifteen episodes back and give **El Caballero** a chance to prove himself. Give chances for betrayal, then hand the knife to a player and whisper for them to twist it.

Principles

- ♥ Make the surroundings glamorous and beautiful
- ♥ Address yourself to the characters, not the players
- ♥ Make your move, but misdirect
- ♥ Make your move, but never speak its name
- ♥ Give everything a price and reward sacrifice
- ♥ Fill the character's lives with secrets
- ♥ Hound the players with betrayal and doubt
- ♥ Be a fan of the players' characters
- ♥ Never let them get comfortable
- ♥ Sometimes, declaim decision making

Many of these principles are from **Apocalypse World** and familiar to people who have run Powered by the Apocalypse games. Find chances to keep people off-balance, to keep their eyes on their next goal, on their next target. Remind them that their success and happiness can be taken away, that they are driven by their passions. Let things get bad, get worse, and give an opportunity to pull themselves out of the fire or go missing. Until next episode.

MC Moves

- ♥ Inflict stress (as established)
- ♥ Put people together or pull them apart
- ♥ Cross a boundary between public and private spheres
- ♥ Let the wrong person know what is going on
- ♥ Put someone in a spot
- ♥ Disrupt their routine
- ♥ Make them an offer to get their way
- ♥ Offer immunity by giving up love
- ♥ Turn their move back on them
- ♥ Lean on a secret
- ♥ Demand they play their part
- ♥ After every move, ask "what do you do?"

When a player rolls a miss or a golden opportunity presents itself, it's your job to act. Remember the Agendas and the Principles, then pick a move. Vary your moves, keep players guessing, and act decisively; you don't need permission to make your contribution to the story. Make the move as hard as the narrative demands, but don't always keep the characters down. Each move is an opportunity to set up big twists and moments in your telenovela!

Managing NPCs

The players are the core characters of the show. They're the ones shown in the introductions, they're on the poster, people are tuning in to see them. That doesn't mean there may not be another person who makes a showing or that the world is empty apart from them; you fill in the roles that need to be there: a jealous ex-lover, the investigators looking after a crime syndicate, perhaps the crime syndicate itself. Everyone who isn't a player is you.

NPC Stress and Harm

When characters direct their stress-causing moves towards NPCs, make it count. The social pressure we are most interested in is the pressure between PCs. There's not a lot of fun in seeing a PC who wants to feel manipulative and clever be totally stymied by the guy who drives their car.

If an NPC marks a single stress, they should be obviously distraught and trying hard to not mark more. If they mark a second stress, they're probably just about ready to crumple under the PC's ire.

For this reason, NPCs should also avoid marking stress when they can give in. If you can't bring yourself to cave to a PC's will (or if it doesn't make sense for the NPC), give Leverage before you mark stress. It's more interesting for the PCs to know they have an extra resource in their back pocket.

Snowballing Moves

If all goes well, your players will be making moves constantly. This isn't because they want to interface with the rules, but because the core telenovela actions lead into moves which should lead into more moves. The moves are designed to put people into positions that they are more likely to make more moves.

Behind The Playbooks

Before you run your first session (or before the second if this gets to you too late!) take a moment to see how the different playbooks work and fit together. They are designed to play and feel different, and the choices that players make should give you an idea of what they want to do!

It is your job as *Producción* to give them opportunities to do those things! If you've got **El Jefe** and you set him up to always look like the hero, he'll likely be sad he didn't get a chance to be the heel! If you give **La Empleada** a fat stack of money in the first session, will she still feel separate from high society?

The moves that players choose also creates goalposts for what players want to do. It's a lot to keep track of, but pay attention also to what moves people are choosing and give them a chance to use them!

La Belleza

La Belleza wants all eyes on them and to feel glamorous and wanted. She likely has NPCs that are eating out of her hand, but want to control her. Give her social situations to dominate and remind her of promises she didn't expect to keep.

El Caballero

The essence of **El Caballero** is the dichotomy between being a proper gentleman and a rough-and-tumble cowboy. He is surrounded by plots, tricks, and lies, but chose the playbook that cuts straight to the truth. Give him webs to explode through and NPCs that are willing to go head-to-head when he kicks the door in.

La Doña

The role of **La Doña** is one that requires a certain amount of delicacy and a willingness to put others first before taking for yourself. A player choosing **La Doña** wants that layer of control over other characters; she wants to set things up behind the scenes. Give her NPCs that challenge those under her protection, or perhaps some NPCs to take care of.

La Empleada

The core of **La Empleada** is the relationship she has with her Suitors: encourages her to go between the two of them, taking advantage of her Lover while using the other Suitor as a way to lower stress. Of course, each time she does this it is more likely the opposite Suitor will come looking for her! Make sure that **La Empleada** has plenty of opportunities to bounce between the two, but never let her forget that she's separate (and lower) from the wealth that surrounds her.

El Gemelo

El Gemelo is one of the first things Americans think of when they hear about a telenovela. **El Gemelo** isn't by necessity an evil twin, but they certainly have plans of their own. Pay attention to what playbook they are the twin of—the twin of **La Empleada** is probably going to be taking advantage of her naïveté, but the twin of **El Jefe** may be just as cruel or a mirror image. Either way, their story is about swapping who they are: the image of their twin and their own person.

El Jefe

El Jefe is the boss—rich, powerful, and in control of things. They're typically physically imposing, confident, and often a little bit evil. At the very least they are dangerous, and players that choose **El Jefe** want to be bad. Getting a gasp of horror for advancement means they'll be taking any chance they can to twist the knife. Give them underlings and people to strike out against, but whenever possible aim them towards the other PCs.

The Long Example

Here's a little slice of play that shows how moves work featuring Rocio, **La Empleada**, played by Jane; Valencia Gutiérrez, **La Doña**, played by Veronica; and Domingo Gutiérrez, **El Caballero**, played by Nick.

.....
Things have been moving quickly and the Gutiérrez family fortune is in question! To get some quiet intimacy, I set the scene in La Rosa Nautica Hotel which has been shut down due to the financial crunch. La Rosa has been used quite a bit, so I don't get too into describing it; more important is where things are different--the sheets over tables and chairs, the empty bar, the balcony above putting out no music.

Rocio is there to clean up, going about her regular workday, and Domingo, the handsome heir of the Gutiérrez fortune, is here to find her. Neither of them know that Valencia, Domingo's mother, is up in the balcony watching, though we draw attention to that so that Shana and Emily can react appropriately as the audience.

I set things up with what we know from the previous scene, "Domingo just came in from the rain, he's dripping water everywhere and trying to find Rocio. She's cleaning up behind the bar and Valencia is watching from above, hidden from your vision. What do you do?"

"I'm rushing in," says Nick immediately, "I run straight to her. 'Rocio--'"

"Oh no, I cut him off," responds Jane, "Last time I saw him he blew me off."

"Okay! Go ahead!" I put on my best rapt audience attention face.

"No me digas, Domingo! I'm tired of your excuses! You always show up with flowers or kind words, but it's too late. Eladio and I are happy now!" Jane snaps, getting right back into it.

*"Perfect!" I cheer, "That's definitely **lashing out with voice or violence.**"*

"Okay," responds Jane, checking her questions. "I'm definitely in over my head, so that's +1. I think I've caught him off guard?"

Nick nods, "Definitely. Domingo wasn't ready. Has he just now wronged you?"

"He wronged me, but it wasn't just now. So that's a +2." Jane rolls and manages an 8 with the modifier, so Domingo's taking 2 stress and she gets to pick one option off the list.

Jane chooses to revel in causing pain--she's just pleased as can be to have things figured out with Eladio. This does mean she doesn't keep her composure, and gives Domingo a Leverage; Jane describes how she's got tears going down her face and she knocked over a bottle of wine, having to step back quickly to avoid shattered glass. "Look what you made me do!"

Shana, not in this scene and therefore a member of the audience, puts a hand over her heart and whispers out, "Awwwww... Pobrecita..." Jane marks experience!

Domingo's reeling from the hit. Nick finishes putting in his marked stress. "Ah crap, that put me at 5 stress. I've got to mark Frazzled. That's going to make this interesting. I sweep off my jacket and throw it over the broken glass, 'Rocio, please, I can explain. I told you that you can't be with Eladio because...' I fumble in my pocket and take out a piece of paper."

The paper's new, we haven't heard anything about it. "What's the paper?" I ask, trying to make sure I didn't just miss something.

"It's a printed photograph of Eladio and her twin Rosa kissing," responds Nick, "I faked it before getting here."

"MENTIROSO!" calls out Jane. She's grinning ear to ear, but she wants to keep the pressure on Domingo

"Hold on, hold on! Domingo faked evidence, that's rolling to **flash back to a time you made preparations**. How much stress are you spending?"

Nick decides to spend 2 stress, putting him at 7 (and therefore just one stress from an emotional meltdown!) and rolls. He gets a 9, +2 brings him to 11, so he'll take a +1 forward as well. Nick describes, "We see Domingo in a back alley talking with a man in a big trench coat, handing over a photo of Eladio and one of Rosa. Money exchanges hands, then a quick second flash where Domingo gets the photo back... It's perfect."

"Eladio's been lying to you, taking advantage of you," Nick says in a begging voice. "But Rocio, I would never do that. I am truly yours. I always have been. I thought there was nothing left for me--just the road and these old boots and if I'm lucky, a bottle of whiskey at the end of it. Then I saw you and I had purpose. My life, Rocio, is yours."

Emily and Shannon in chorus let out a loud sigh, fawning over themselves.

*“You beat me to it,” I say, “Super dreamy. Go ahead and mark experience, Domingo! But dreamy enough? Roll to **express your love passionately.**”*

“Yes!” responds Nick, “I’m not exactly handling things head on... I’m not dressed to impress either, I’m soaking wet. Actually, hold on... Does dressed to impress mean looking good or dressed fancy?” I smile and nod at both options.

“Okay, yeah, +1, I’m dressed to impress and an extra +1 because I’m definitely very single.” He makes his roll, a 7, plus the 2 from his questions and +1 forward from his flashback: a 10, if he wasn’t Frazzled. 8 it is, so Jane chooses one: giving herself to him, revealing a secret she probably shouldn’t, marking off stress to conceal her feelings, or giving him Leverage and telling him how he reached her.

Jane quickly intercedes, “I take his hands, ‘Is... Is this true?”

Nick nods, “Forever.”

“Then I kiss him!” She picked giving herself to him! How romantic!

“Valencia, you’ve seen all of this. What are you doing?” I ask.

“Oh, I’ve been recording all of it,” responds Veronica, “I’m on the balcony with a glass of red wine in one hand and a little video camera in the other. Veronica gives a smile...and I’m going to flashback to a scene with our lawyer Antonio.”

Shannon nods and says, “Okay, what is it?”

*“It’s a **flashback to a deal we made,**” Veronica states, spending 3 Leverage she has over Antonio, and making her roll. She gets a total of 10; she sets both aspects of the deal. “We flashback to Antonio and Valencia cuddled together and I’m stroking a hand over his chest, ‘Antonio...I just need you to make a little change to the will. Domingo can only receive his father’s fortune if he agrees to marry someone of his station. And when I prove he is after a poor woman, you’ll receive... a 20% share.”*

Nick and Jane gasp at that; that’s going to throw a wrench in their love story. But more importantly, Emily’s rolling her eyes and putting on her best teenage voice, “Uuugh, she can’t just let them be!”

“Awesome, so you’ve got proof and you’re manipulative enough to set off the audience! Mark experience, then let’s give Domingo and Rocio a little privacy and see what’s going on with Antonio...”

.....

Mediography:

There's no shortage of telenovelas. It can be tough to find the right ones to check out to get a feel for the genre. Here are some of the more famous sources!

Television Shows (English)

- ♥ Ugly Betty
- ♥ Queen of the South
- ♥ Jane the Virgin

Television Shows (Spanish)

- ♥ Yo Soy Betty La Fea
- ♥ La Reina del Sur
- ♥ Marimar
- ♥ Soy tu Duena
- ♥ La Usurpadora
- ♥ Volver a Empezar

Podcasts

- ♥ Celestial Blood/Sangre Celestial

Finalmente

Pasión de las Pasiones went from concept to implementation to this book thanks to the Magpie Games' ashcan program. When I first brought my unfinished game to Metatopia in 2016, my biggest fear was that Mark, Brendan, or any of the rest of the Magpie crew would show up to play. When Mark shook my hand before my first playtest and introduced himself, I thought I was going to faint. But his support has set me on an incredible twisting, turning path full of opportunity and wonders.

The Magpie Games' ashcan program gave me the skills and resources needed to push **Pasión de las Pasiones** to be the game I wanted it to be. It couldn't have happened without them, and I am so thankful for their support. Magpie Games was my favorite publisher way before they had ever heard of me or **Pasión**; it has been such an honor to work with them on my own creation. Thank you to all of you!

*The music swells as Elena enters the church, her silver dress dancing around her heels. The camera zooms to her face as she catches sight of Domingo, **el amor de su vida**, the man she will marry in secret tonight. Elena's eyes light with joy and she starts forward—gliding, then running—a joyful laugh escaping her lips. She catches her beloved's shoulder...but he turns to reveal that he is her beloved's evil twin, Juan Carlos!*

Watching the television from the comfort of home, the Rodríguez family explodes into discussion and shouts. How could this have happened? And what will happen on next week's episode?

Sit on the couch with *la familia* and turn on *Pasión de las Pasiones*, a tabletop RPG of desire, betrayal, and family inspired by the telenovelas of Latin America. You'll play the heroes, lovers, schemers, and villains of the world's most dramatic and exciting telenovela: *Pasión de las Pasiones*. At the same time, you'll also play a Latino family gasping, jeering, and swooning at home.

Lies will be exposed, plots will be shattered, hearts will be broken. If you're lucky, maybe you'll even throw *El Generalísimo* off a boat and get a happy ending filled with flowers, dancing, and romance. Of course, never 'happy' or 'ending' enough to stop tomorrow's episode from plunging you back into the fray.

Because if you didn't see the body, **they'll be back.**

This Ashcan Edition is a preview version of *Pasión de las Pasiones*: it has everything you need to try your hand at telenovela thrills. A future release will contain more resources and playbooks.

magpiegames.com/pasion



POWERED BY THE
APOCALYPSE



Players
3-5

Time
2-4 hrs

Rating
Teen