



Press Release

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For Immediate Release...

Isabel Allende Creates The Original Zorro Legend

Berkeley, CA January 15, 2005 - Zorro Productions, Inc. proudly announces the upcoming publication by Harper Collins of the classic tale of the origin of the Zorro legend by internationally acclaimed author Isabel Allende.

Allende is a world renowned writer who commands international prestige for her previous novels which include *House of the Spirits*, *Of Love and Shadows*, *Paula*, *Eva Luna*, *Daughter of Fortune*, and *The Infinite Plan*, among others.

When approached with the opportunity to invent the formative tale which lays the background for the Zorro legend, Allende's incredibly facile mind began spinning an amazing adventure. No one has ever written the official story of how the young boy, Diego de la Vega, became Zorro. Born in California to a Spanish father, why was Diego so concerned about justice? Why was he committed to protecting the oppressed? Why did he dress in black, hide his identity, and work under cover of darkness? What significance did his medallion have? What was his relationship with Bernardo and the Native Americans near the Pueblo de Los Angeles?

Allende meticulously researched the historical period to provide a realistic background for the legend of this international hero. "It began ten years ago, when I was but a lad of fifteen," Diego says in the original *Curse of Capistrano*, "I heard tales of persecution. I saw my friends, the frailes, annoyed and robbed. I saw soldiers beat an old native who was my friend. And then I determined to play this game."

Drawing on Spanish history, California history, Native American lore, Mexican folk tales and the original McCulley story, Allende constructs a uniquely textured tale of adventure, intrigue and romance through treacherous ocean crossings, encounters with pirates and secret societies. With her intrinsic connection to Hispanic culture, journalistic experience, passionate connection to the human condition, and love of challenge, Zorro Productions feels fortunate to be partnering with Allende on this unique collaboration.

A spin-off series of middle reader novels will deepen Allende's blueprint for Diego's early life in both California and in Spain.

For more information on Zorro projects, visit our website at www.zorro.com.