

"THE SECRET OF EL ZORRO"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. HACIENDA DE LA VEGA - DAY

PUSH IN on the hacienda and cut to...

EXT. COURTYARD GARDEN AREA

where Alejandro is on his knees tending his roses along with Bernardo.

ALEJANDRO

When I was a young man, Bernardo,
I once fought for a young
señorita's honor with a sword in
my hand and a rose between my
teeth...

Alejandro picks up a pair of old-fashioned garden clippers.

ALEJANDRO

Now I wield my garden clippers and
make sure the thorns don't stick
me.

Bernardo smiles and nods with understanding.

CLOSER ON ALEJANDRO

He spots a particularly beautiful rose at the back of the bush.

ALEJANDRO

Ah! There is a beautiful one.

As he reaches out with his clippers, cut...

INSIDE THE BUSH

FOLLOW Alejandro's hand as it reaches through the leaves. As his clippers find the right stem WIDEN to reveal his hand is directly above a coiled rattlesnake! And as Alejandro clips the stem the snake RATTLES and strikes his hand.

TWO SHOT - ALEJANDRO AND BERNARDO

Alejandro yanks his hand back out of the bush, grasps it with his other hand.

ALEJANDRO

Aahhh!

Bernardo reacts with alarm, then notices as the rattler slithers away. Bernardo moves to Alejandro, helps him to his feet.

WIDER ON HACIENDA

Bernardo helps Alejandro through the courtyard and...

INSIDE THE ENTRANCE HALLWAY

As Bernardo helps Alejandro down the hallway Diego enters, reacting with alarm.

DIEGO

Father! What happened?

ALEJANDRO

(weaker)

A rattlesnake...bit me.

Diego immediately assists Bernardo as they help Don Alejandro up the stairs. Then cut to...

INT. ALEJANDRO'S BEDROOM - DAY

The door opens and Diego and Bernardo help Alejandro to his bed, onto his back.

CLOSER ANGLE

as Diego puts a pillow under his father's head.

ALEJANDRO

(strained breathing)

Oh...

CLOSE ON ALEJANDRO'S HAND

It is red and inflamed, with two small red spots (the puncture wounds).

WIDER ON BED

Diego and Bernardo lean over Alejandro, whose eyelids grow heavy, sweat beading on his forehead.

ALEJANDRO

(very weak)

Diego...

DIEGO

I'm here, father.

ALEJANDRO

Stay away from...the roses...

(tails off)

DIEGO

He's getting worse rapidly.

(turns to Bernardo)

Take the fastest horse to town and bring back the doctor. Hurry!

Bernardo nods, then rushes out of the room.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ALEJANDRO AND DIEGO

Alejandro's eyes are closed.

ALEJANDRO

(soft moaning)

DIEGO

You are going to be all right, father. I'm here beside you.

Diego stares silently at his father for a beat, then he finds a chair and pulls it closer to his father's bed, sits down.

PUSH IN...

DIEGO

There is something I must tell you. I only hope it is not too late.

(beat)

I am not the kind of son you think I am.

ALEJANDRO

(weak moan)

CLOSE ON DIEGO

DIEGO

Something happened when I was 14
years old that I never told you
about...

RIPPLE DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HACIENDA DE LA VEGA - YEARS EARLIER - DAY

The hacienda should look about 10 years younger, with smaller trees, less foliage, newer paint, etc. A 14 year old Diego runs out of the courtyard. Alejandro, also about 10 years younger, is at the courtyard entrance.

ALEJANDRO

(calling to him)

Diego! Try not to make too much
trouble for the neighbors!

YOUNG DIEGO

I'll try, father...but I cannot
promise anything.

(happy laughter)

As young Diego runs o.s., cut...

CLOSE ON ALEJANDRO

as he shakes his head with fatherly acceptance.

ALEJANDRO

That boy will drive me crazy.

ANGLE ON GULLY BESIDE HACIENDA

Young Diego runs into shot, toward a 12 year old Isabela. He waves at her.

YOUNG DIEGO

Isabela!

YOUNG ISABELA

Diego!

She waves back.

CLOSER ON ISABELA

Diego runs into shot, stops by her.

YOUNG ISABELA

What shall we do today?

YOUNG DIEGO

How about a game of hide-and-seeK? I'll hide first.

YOUNG ISABELA

Very well.

(closes her eyes)

One...two...three...four...

And with that, Diego runs off in a flash.

ANGLE ON GULLY CLIFFS

Diego runs into shot, looks for a place to hide. He spots a cave opening in the side of the cliff, almost fully obscured by hanging vines. He moves through the vines and...

INSIDE THE CAVE

Diego moves a short ways into the dark cave then stops, reacting to what he sees o.s.

YOUNG DIEGO

(echo)

Santa Maria!

WIDER TO REVEAL A FABULOUS UNDERGROUND CAVERN

YOUNG DIEGO

It's fantastico!

As Diego begins to explore the cavern he moves through a limestone archway into...

ANOTHER FABULOUS CAVE

where he walks past several limestone stalactites, scaring up a flurry of bats.

YOUNG DIEGO

Aaah!

Diego covers his face with his arms, stumbles backwards, falling on his face.

CLOSER ON DIEGO

After the bats fly off, Diego opens his eyes. He sits up, spits some dirt off his lips.

YOUNG DIEGO

(spits, then:)

What is that?

WIDEN to reveal there is a gold medallion on a leather band in the limestone rock formation before him. He picks it up, examines it.

CLOSE ON MEDALLION

It sparkles. There is something carved on the face which looks somewhat like a fox.

YOUNG DIEGO (O.S.)

A gold medallion.

WIDER ANGLE

Young Diego gets to his feet, puts the medallion in his pocket. He looks around at the cavern.

YOUNG DIEGO

This cave will be my special place. I shall never tell a soul about it.

WIPE TO:

EXT. THE GULLY

Young Diego exits the cave and moves to...

THE CLEARING

where he left Isabela. He looks around.

YOUNG DIEGO

(calling out)

Isabela! Where are you?

He moves through the trees to...

A STREAM

where he finds young Isabela sitting on a rock, throwing stones in the water.

YOUNG ISABELA

I'm never playing hide-and-seek with you again. Where have you been for the past twenty minutes?

YOUNG DIEGO

I'm sorry. I...must have looked
for you in the wrong places.

The two of them suddenly react to the sound of O.S. SHOUTING
and ROARING.

YOUNG ISABELA

What was that?

YOUNG DIEGO

It came from over there.

And as they head downstream, cut to...

A BANK OF TULES

Young Diego and Isabela part the tules and look through at...

THEIR POV: THE STREAM

Three mean 16 year old boys (HERRERA, RIVAS & CAMACHO) are
trying to capture a big, angry grizzly bear in a net in the
middle of the stream. Camacho prods the bear with a long
stick while the others hold the net.

CAMACHO

Stay in the net, you big, dumb
bear!

RIVAS

(laughing)

This one will bring us a lot of
money when we sell its hide.

TWO SHOT - YOUNG DIEGO AND ISABELA

YOUNG ISABELA

(sotto)

How can they treat such a living
thing so horribly?

YOUNG DIEGO

We must do something, Isabela!
Follow me!

Young Diego moves through the trees, looks around, spots a
long rotted piece of hollow tree which is broken into several
shorter lengths.

YOUNG ISABELA

But how can we stop them?

Diego grabs a piece about three feet long.

YOUNG DIEGO

With this!

THE THREE YOUTHS

continue to poke and pull the grizzly. The bear is obviously growing weaker from the struggle, MOANING more than growling.

HERRERA

We've got it, now!

Suddenly the youths react to an O.S. ECHOING ROAR. They turn and look off at...

THEIR POV: THE TREES

The leaves and branches rustle as we hear LOUDER ROARING. Then cut to...

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TREES

where young Diego holds his face into one end of the hollow log, making a roaring sound into it while young Isabela shakes the tree.

YOUNG DIEGO

(deep roaring sound)

BACK TO THE THREE YOUTHS

RIVAS

(panicked)

It's another grizzly!

CAMACHO

We cannot handle two of them.

HERRERA

Run!

The three of them release the net and run downstream. The grizzly angrily throws the net off, ROARING at them. Then...

YOUNG DIEGO AND ISABELA

step through the trees. Diego still holds the hollow log, roaring through it.

YOUNG DIEGO
(more roaring)

Then young Diego and Isabela break into laughter.

YOUNG DIEGO & ISABELA
(laughing)

WIDE ON STREAM - FAVORING THREE YOUTHS

Now downstream, the three youths stop and look back past the grizzly at Diego & Isabela, by the trees, laughing. Herrera shakes his fist at them.

HERRERA
I'll get you for this, Diego de la Vega.

The grizzly takes a few steps toward them and ROARS. Then the three youths continue running downstream.

TWO SHOT - YOUNG DIEGO AND ISABELA

YOUNG ISABELA
That was...[laugh]...really clever, Diego.

YOUNG DIEGO
Did you see the looks on their faces?
(more laughing)

There is a sudden LOUD O.S. ROAR. Diego and Isabela react, their laughter replaced by wide-eyed fear. WIDEN to reveal the grizzly is standing behind them, towering over them.

YOUNG ISABELA
(lets out a scream)
Diego! Run!

Isabela runs o.s. but Diego backs into a tree, staring up at the big bear. The bear raises its clawed paws menacingly, lets out a ROAR. Then cut...

TIGHT ON DIEGO

He covers his face with his arms in panic as the shadow of the bear moves over him. Suddenly he is illuminated by a magical glowing light coming from o.s. He looks o.s. in awe as the shadow of the bear changes form into a human. Then cut...

BACK TO SCENE

to reveal Grey Owl (about ten years younger) standing before young Diego.

GREY OWL

Do not fear. I will not harm you.

Diego lowers his arms, reacts with surprise.

YOUNG DIEGO

You...you're a bear! I mean, you were a bear. Who...who are you?

Young Diego reaches out tentatively and touches Grey Owl to make sure he's not imaging her.

GREY OWL

My name is Grey Owl. And I want to thank you for helping me.

YOUNG DIEGO

You're welcome...I think.

CLOSER ON GREY OWL AND YOUNG DIEGO

GREY OWL

(laughs warmly)

Be calm. I sense that you and I are destined to be lifelong friends.

YOUNG DIEGO

We are?

Grey Owl looks down, spots something o.s.

HER POV: CLOSE DOWN ANGLE ON GOLD MEDALLION

on the ground. She reaches down and picks it up.

BACK TO GREY OWL AND YOUNG DIEGO

Grey Owl looks at the medallion with great interest.

GREY OWL

Where did you get this?

YOUNG DIEGO

Uh, I found it in a cave. Do you know what it means?

CLOSE ON MEDALLION

Grey Owl rubs her finger over it.

GREY OWL (O.S.)

It is the image of "El Zorro"...the fox.

BACK TO GREY OWL AND YOUNG DIEGO

She places the medallion around Diego's neck.

GREY OWL

It means you are bound for greatness.

TIGHT ON YOUNG DIEGO

He looks at the medallion hanging from his neck.

YOUNG DIEGO

It does? But what kind of...

Young Diego looks up, reacts with surprise. WIDEN to reveal Grey Owl is gone.

YOUNG DIEGO

...greatness? Grey Owl?

As young Diego looks around, we hear APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS ON A HARD FLOOR and a strange voice:

EL DOCTOR (V.O.)

Don Diego!

CUT TO:

INT. ALEJANDRO'S BEDROOM - PRESENT TIME - NIGHT

Diego is seated at Alejandro's bedside. Alejandro is asleep as Bernardo enters with the doctor. Diego stands up.

DIEGO

Doctor Navarro. Thank you for
coming.

The doctor moves to Alejandro's bedside, begins to examine his
inflamed hand.

EL DOCTOR

Bernardo told me what happened.

FAVORING ALEJANDRO AND DOCTOR

The doctor checks Alejandro's eyes, opening one eyelid and
looking at the staring pupil.

EL DOCTOR

I must remove the poison as
quickly as possible.

As the doctor opens his medical bag we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ALEJANDRO'S BEDROOM - SHORT WHILE LATER

Alejandro is asleep in bed, his hand bandaged. Diego and
Bernardo watch the doctor put his things back in his bag.

EL DOCTOR

I am afraid the poison has already
spread dangerously through your
father's body.

The doctor removes a small vial from his bag.

EL DOCTOR

Our only hope of improving his
condition...

CLOSE ON VIAL IN DOCTOR'S HAND

EL DOCTOR (O.S.)

...is with this new serum from
Paris.

ANGLE ON ALEJANDRO'S END TABLE

There is a vase of roses on the table, along with a pitcher of
water and an empty glass. The doctor places the vial onto the
table, then starts to pour a glass of water from a pitcher
when...

THE CURTAINS

on the nearby window blow inward from a gust of wind and...

THE ROSES

are blown over, knocking the vial off the table. And as...

DIEGO AND THE DOCTOR

react with alarm...

EL DOCTOR
(gasps)

AND THE VIAL

hits the floor and shatters! And as the MUSIC STINGS we...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ALEJANDRO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Diego, Bernardo and the doctor react in alarm to the sight of the broken vial on the floor.

EL DOCTOR

The serum!

(turns to Diego)

Don Diego, I am terribly sorry. I should have been more careful...

The doctor hangs his head in shame. Diego comforts him.

DIEGO

It was not your fault, Doctor Navarro. We do not need to blame ourselves, but we must find more serum.

CLOSE ON DOCTOR NAVARRO

EL DOCTOR

Thankfully, there is one more vial in the garrison's infirmary!

FULL ON BEDROOM

EL DOCTOR

Try to keep your father's fever down with cold compresses. I will bring back the serum as soon as I can.

As the doctor rushes out of the room, cut...

CLOSER ON ALEJANDRO

Diego is one side of the bed, Bernardo on the side by the end table. Bernardo pours some water from the pitcher onto a cloth, then places it on Alejandro's forehead. Alejandro's head slowly moves from side to side.

ALEJANDRO

(moaning)

PUSH IN on Diego (and Alejandro) as he takes a seat beside his father once again.

DIEGO

You must get well, father, so that
you can know me not only as Diego,
your son, but as Zorro.

CLOSE ON ALEJANDRO

DIEGO (O.S.)

It seems like just yesterday that
I was 14 years old...

RIPPLE DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THREE-MASTED SHIP ON THE HIGH SEAS - DAY

The ship heads from left to right.

DIEGO (V.O.)

...and you sent me off to Spain to
begin my education...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF MADRID - DAY

Fourteen year old Diego stands in the middle of the large
campus, looking in awe at the buildings and students.

DIEGO (V.O.)

...at the University of Madrid.

DISSOLVE TO:

A MONTAGE OF QUICK CUTS INCLUDING:

...A LARGE CLASSROOM (DAY) where young Diego (15 years old) is
seated in the front row watching as the professor points to a
picture of the solar system (sans Neptune and Pluto).

...A CHEMISTRY LAB (DAY) where young Diego (16 years) wears an
apron, standing before a lab table covered with old-fashioned
glass chemical apparatus. Diego pours some green liquid onto
a tiny pile of powder and it flashes with a small explosion.
The professor standing over Diego's shoulder nods with
admiration.

...AN ART STUDIO (DAY) where Diego (17) and several other
students make charcoal sketches of a bowl of fruit as their
teacher watches.

...A WHEAT FIELD (DAY) where Diego's professor watches as Diego (18) indicates that his green wheat plants are higher and more healthy than the ones planted next to them. The professor smiles and nods, making a notation in his notebook.

...A GYMNASIUM (DAY) where young Diego (19) is fencing with another student, easily disarming him to the applause of the other students and instructor.

...THE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID COURTYARD (DAY) where Diego (20), in his graduation gown, receives his diploma from the rector.

DIEGO (V.O.)

(over previous montage)

Though at first I had intended only to bring the wonders of Europe's science and culture back to El Pueblo, an unexpected turn of events made me realize that my newly acquired knowledge and skills might be useful for a much greater purpose.

...END MONTAGE.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MADRID STREET - DAY

Diego (20) stands outside a postoffice, reading a letter.

DIEGO (V.O.)

In fact, it was the letters you sent to me, father...

CLOSE ON YOUNG DIEGO (20)

He reacts with great emotional concern to what he reads.

DIEGO (V.O.)

...telling me of military injustices in El Pueblo, that would change my life forever.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HARBOR AT BARCELONA - DAY

Diego (20) is at the dock, beside his ship, his baggage filled with new plants, art and science. There are two horses

already on the ship's deck. Diego watches as two more are led up the gangplank by dock workers.

DIEGO
(calls out to workers)
Careful with those two! I have
special plans for them.

CLOSE ON DIEGO

He suddenly reacts with great interest to...

HIS POV: A BEAUTIFUL BLACK STALLION

kicking the splinters out of some nearby shipping crates as two men try to get him under control. (Note: This is Toronado.)

DIEGO (O.S.)
What a magnificent horse.

BACK TO DIEGO

He watches as the men struggle to get the horse up the gangplank.

DIEGO
Too bad he is a wild one or I
would have liked to purchase him
for myself.

WIDER ON DOCK

As Diego moves up the gangplank, followed by two dock workers who carry his baggage...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THREE-MASTED SAILING SHIP - ON HIGH SEAS - DAY

As the ship moves from right to left...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EL PUEBLO HARBOR - DAY

Diego's ship is docked. PUSH IN on the dock and cut...

CLOSER ON ALEJANDRO AND BERNARDO

Diego enters, hugs his father.

ALEJANDRO

Diego, my son! It's so good to see you again.

They un-embrace. Diego looks at his father.

DIEGO

Not as good as it is to see you, father.

(turns to Bernardo)

And you too, Bernardo.

Bernardo clasps Diego's hands with a smile.

ANOTHER ANGLE

to reveal Capitán Montecero standing beside them.

MONTECERO

Ahem!

Alejandro notices the Capitán.

ALEJANDRO

Oh! Diego, allow me to introduce the new commander of the garrison, Capitán Montecero.

MONTECERO

Your father has told me you are quite an intelligent young man.

DIEGO

(back-offish)

Thank you, Capitán. And he has told me a lot about you as well.

The Capitán smiles smugly.

WIDER ANGLE

DIEGO

Look, father! I brought a present for you.

Alejandro beams with enthusiasm as a dock worker leads Diego's two horses up to them.

ALEJANDRO

Diego! They are magnifico! Gracias, gracias!

MONTECERO

There is nothing quite like
Spanish horses. I have imported
some for the garrison as well.

STILL WIDER TO INCLUDE THE OTHER THREE HORSES

Two are calm, but the wild black stallion is still having to
be held down by two of Montecero's soldiers.

MONTECERO

Beautiful, eh?

FAVORING BLACK STALLION

It suddenly rears up and WHINNIES, kicking its forelegs and
sending the soldiers scurrying.

SOLDIERS

(frightened walla)

As the stallion pulls free we cut...

WIDER ON DOCK

They all watch as the stallion gallops down the dock and
disappears.

ALEJANDRO

It appears there was a bad apple
amongst the bunch, eh, Capitán?

MONTECERO

Bah! Better to get rid of him
now.

TWO SHOT - ALEJANDRO AND DIEGO

They exchange a furtive glance.

DIEGO

(sotto)

I can think of some other bad
apples I'd like to get rid of.

DISSOLVE TO:

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS:

EXT. FARM - DAY

Diego is with a farmer beside a newly tilled field. There are several flats containing the tall green wheat stalks that Diego developed at the university. He helps the farmer plant them.

DIEGO (V.O.)

In the months that followed, I brought other gifts to my friends in El Pueblo.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FARM - WEEKS LATER

Diego and the farmer are looking at the towering field of grain.

DIEGO (V.O.)

For Don Gregorio, a heartier breed of grain.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Diego is with an engineer at a construction site where a mine shaft is being dug in the side of a mountain. There are various pieces of construction equipment and workmen around them. There is also an open keg of blasting powder beside Diego, who is showing the engineer a handful of the black powder.

DIEGO (V.O.)

For Señor De Luna, the engineer...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - LATER THAT DAY

Diego and the engineer watch from some distance as a large explosion blows out of the mine shaft. The engineer smiles at Diego, very excited with what he has seen.

DIEGO (V.O.)

...a more efficient burning black powder.

DISSOLVE:

INSIDE A BLACKSMITH'S SHOP - DAY

Diego is with the blacksmith, showing him a diagram with technical drawings on it of a new furnace and some chemical symbols. The blacksmith nods with curiosity.

DIEGO (V.O.)

And for Pedro the blacksmith...

DISSOLVE TO:

INSIDE THE BLACKSMITH'S SHOP - WEEKS LATER - DAY

The equipment shown on the diagram is now built in the shop, the furnace glowing red hot inside. The blacksmith smiles with pride as he shows Diego a fine new sword he has made. Diego takes it, whips the blade, nodding with approval.

DIEGO (V.O.)

...a method of making superior steel.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EL PUEBLO TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The town is bustling. Several of the people wave at Don Diego, on horseback, as he passes.

DIEGO (V.O.)

But my success in bringing a better life to our friends and neighbors was short-lived...

Diego reacts to something, looks o.s. at...

HIS POV: THE GARRISON

Montecero and his soldiers gallop out of the front gate.

DIEGO (V.O.)

...when Capitán Montecero tightened his ruthless grip on El Pueblo.

WIPE TO:

ANOTHER SERIES OF CUTS:

EXT. FARM - DAY

Capitán Montecero (on horseback) and his men confiscate the farmers heartier crop harvest, carting off a wagon load of grain sacks as the farmer looks on with distress.

DIEGO (V.O.)

He confiscated Don Gregorio's grain harvest to pay for back taxes...

WIPE TO:

EXT. GARRISON COURTYARD - DAY

Montecero watches as the engineer, standing in the back of a wagon, hands black powder kegs to the soldiers.

DIEGO (V.O.)

...forced Señor De Luna to make black powder only for the army, claiming it was a military secret...

WIPE TO:

INSIDE THE BLACKSMITH'S SHOP - DAY

Montecero holds his own sword against the blacksmith's chest. The blacksmith watches helplessly as Montecero's soldiers gather up all his swords.

DIEGO (V.O.)

...and threatened to shut down Pedro's shop if he used his new steel for anything but the garrison's weapons.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MONTECERO'S OFFICE - DAY

Three soldiers are at attention before Montecero's desk. They are the same three we saw earlier as boys trying to capture the grizzly (Herrera, Rivas and Camacho), only about 10 years older now.

MONTECERO

Señor Fuentes is late with his taxes. Go to his ranch and teach him a lesson in "punctuality."
Heh, heh, heh.

They salute their capitán.

HERRERA

Sí, mi Capitán!

As they turn and march out of the room, Diego barges in past them and confronts Montecero.

DIEGO

Capitán Montecero! You have no right to confiscate those things I have brought back from Spain and given to my friends.

TWO SHOT - MONTECERO AND DIEGO

MONTECERO

(coolly)

Oh, but I have every right, Don Diego. It is my job to look out for the best interests of El Pueblo, and that is all I am doing.

IN THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE MONTECERO'S OFFICE

Herrera, Rivas and Camacho listen through the closed door.

DIEGO (O.S.)

What you are doing may be good for the army, but not for the people.

BACK TO DIEGO AND MONTECERO

DIEGO

And does not the army serve the people, Capitán?

MONTECERO

(growing angry)

On the contrary, Diego, it is the people who serve the Crown and its representatives, of which I am one.

DIEGO

With all due respect, Capitán, if I must go directly to the Governor to improve conditions in El Pueblo I will do so.

As Diego storms out of the room, Montecero calls after him:

MONTECERO

Do as you please. But remember, I work for him!

BACK IN THE HALLWAY

Diego moves past the three soldiers. PUSH IN on them.

HERRERA

It seems Don Diego is still butting into other peoples' business.

CAMACHO

Sí. I think we should teach him to respect his superiors.
(sinister laughter)

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD THRU EL PUEBLO - NIGHT

As Diego quietly rides his horse toward home the three soldiers suddenly gallop into shot, surrounding him.

CAMACHO

Remember us, Don Diego?

RIVAS

You prevented us from capturing a grizzly bear many years ago.

HERRERA

Now it is payback time.

They draw their swords.

DIEGO

I am unarmed, señores.

CAMACHO

That is your misfortune.

Rivas moves up behind Diego and pulls him off his horse and onto the dirt.

CLOSER ON DIEGO

He gets up, his clothes dirty. Suddenly the three soldiers enter on foot, surrounding him just like they did the grizzly. Camacho throws a net over Diego who begins to struggle. They prod him with their swords.

CAMACHO

This time we won't lose our
ferocious beast, eh mi amigos?

RIVAS

(laughing)

Sí. But it is too bad we cannot
sell his hide.

The three soldiers freeze as they hear a FEROCIOUS O.S. ROAR. As they look o.s. we cut to...

THE GRIZZLY BEAR

towering before camera, backlit by the full moon. It opens wide and ROARS again.

CLOSE ON CAMACHO

CAMACHO

It's the bear!!

FULL ON DIEGO AND THREE SOLDIERS

As the grizzly approaches them, the soldiers let go of Diego and turn their swords toward the bear. The grizzly swings its paw at them, knocking their swords away. The three of them scramble away in panic.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The soldiers, on their horses, gallop off into the distance. PUSH IN on the grizzly and Diego. Diego throws the net off himself, looks up at the bear.

DIEGO

Grey Owl? Is that you?

CLOSE ON DIEGO

He reacts as Grey Owl's o.s. magical energy illuminates his face.

BACK TO SCENE

Her magical energy fades away leaving Grey Owl standing before Diego.

GREY OWL

We meet again, my friend.

CLOSER ON DIEGO AND GREY OWL

DIEGO

Yes. It was lucky you showed up when you did. Thank you.

GREY OWL

It was not luck, Diego. It was... destiny.

DIEGO

I don't understand.

CLOSE ON GREY OWL

GREY OWL

There is great turmoil within you.

CLOSE ON DIEGO

GREY OWL (O.S.)

You want so passionately to help your people but are stopped by the forces of injustice.

BACK TO DIEGO AND GREY OWL

DIEGO

Yes, it's true. But what is the answer?

CLOSE ON DIEGO'S CHEST

Grey Owl's hand reaches into shot, gently takes the leather cord that is around Diego's neck and pulls out the medallion hidden under his shirt. She taps it.

GREY OWL (O.S.)

Do what is in your heart.

PUSH IN on the medallion and...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HACIENDA COURTYARD - CLOSE ON MEDALLION - NIGHT

WIDEN to reveal Diego is holding the medallion in his hand, looking at it as the moonlight reflects off the image of the fox. Bernardo is with Diego, who is leaning on the courtyard wall.

DIEGO

(thinking to himself)

El zorro, the fox. Do what is in your heart. I still don't know what she meant, Bernardo.

CLOSE ON DIEGO

He looks up, notices something o.s.

HIS POV: A BADGER

chases two baby fox pups into a hole in the ground (backlit by the full moon). The badger starts to dig at the hole. Suddenly a fox runs into shot and attacks the badger from behind. They GROWL and tangle for a beat, then the badger runs off. A beat later the fox pups emerge from the hole. The fox stands up on its hind legs and looks off with a protective attitude. PUSH IN on its silhouette before the moon. Then cut back to...

DIEGO

as his expression changes to one of certainty.

DIEGO

I understand now!

WIDER

Diego turns to Bernardo.

DIEGO

Someone must stand up to Montecero and the others who spread injustice through El Pueblo. I intend to be that one.

CLOSE ON DIEGO

He looks at the medallion.

DIEGO

And that one will be called...El
Zorro!

TWO SHOT - DIEGO AND BERNARDO

DIEGO

Diego de la Vega must never show a
trace of bravado again so that no
one will ever suspect that he and
El Zorro are one and the same.

WIDE ON HACIENDA

DIEGO

And I know just where our new
fox's den should be...

CAMERA PANS away from the house, then PUSHES IN on the nearby
gully. And...

WIPE TO:

INSIDE THE SECRET CAVERNS BENEATH THE HACIENDA

Diego leads Bernardo into the beautiful caverns under the
hacienda.

DIEGO

I've never shown this place to
anyone before, Bernardo. This
shall be Zorro's lair.

CLOSER ON DIEGO AND BERNARDO

Bernardo looks at Diego, smiling with approval. He writes a
note and hands it to Diego.

DIEGO (V.O.)

Bernardo was pleased with my
decision and offered to help me in
the fight for justice.

DISSOLVE TO:

A SHORT MONTAGE:

as Bernardo helps Diego turn the cavern into Zorro's lair, setting up the various areas, including the practice equipment, Bernardo's workbench, etc. Then Bernardo works on some special devices, including a crossbow and a small sleeve-cannon. Finally, Diego sketches his Zorro outfit on paper and Bernardo fashions it from black cloth.

DIEGO (V.O.)

(over montage)

Over the following months, we worked together to turn the caverns into my secret lair. Bernardo used his mechanical skills to construct special devices of my design, then fashioned my very first Zorro outfit.

DISSOLVE TO:

ZORRO'S LAIR - LATER

The cavern is complete with Zorro's work and practice areas. Diego looks at the fine Zorro outfit Bernardo has fashioned for him, hanging on the clothing dummy.

DIEGO

You've done a magnificent job, Bernardo. Thank you.

TWO SHOT - DIEGO AND BERNARDO

DIEGO

Now there is only one other thing I will need to become a champion for justice...

CLOSE ON DIEGO

DIEGO

...the fastest, smartest horse in El Pueblo.

WIDER

DIEGO

But I fear that such a perfect animal will not be easy to find.

Bernardo brightens. He gestures for Diego to follow him. And as they move through the caverns we cut to...

EXT. GULLY - FAVORING LAIR EXIT - DAY

Bernardo leads Diego out of the lair, points o.s. Diego reacts with surprise. WIDEN to reveal the beautiful black stallion grazing on the nearby tall grass in the lush gully, the military saddle and reins still on him.

DIEGO

It's the runaway stallion!

(to Bernardo)

He must have been living in the gully all this time.

Bernardo nods.

DIEGO

Perhaps he will not be such a wild beast under in my care.

Bernardo remains at the cave entrance as Diego heads toward the horse.

CLOSER ON BLACK STALLION

Diego approaches it cautiously. The horse stops grazing, looks up, lets out a suspicious WHINNY.

DIEGO

Easy now! I won't harm you.

The horse takes a few steps back, but Diego approaches in such a friendly manner that the horse allows Diego to climb onto him. Diego pats the horse's neck.

DIEGO

That's a boy. You're not such a wild one after all, are you?

The stallion suddenly bolts, taking Diego for the wildest ride of his life.

DIEGO

Whoaaa!

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS:

...as the horse races down the gully...

...Diego ducks a low branch...

...Bernardo watches with delight...

...The horse leaps a large dead tree while Diego hangs on tight. Then...

...the horse finally stops abruptly, causing Diego to fly off into the stream with a SPLASH!

DIEGO

Aaaaah!

CLOSER ON DIEGO

He sits up in the water as the horse bends its head down and gives him a friendly nuzzle.

DIEGO

(laughing)

Smart, fast, and with personality,
too!

Bernardo enters, helps Diego out of the water.

DIEGO

He really is the perfect horse,
Bernardo.

FAVORING BLACK STALLION

Diego pats the horse on the nose.

DIEGO

I shall name you "Toronado" for
you run like a storm.

Toronado nods, WHINNYING with approval. Once again we hear RUSHED FOOTSTEPS ON A HARD FLOOR and...

EL DOCTOR (V.O.)

Don Diego!...

THEN CUT TO:

INT. ALEJANDRO'S BEDROOM - THE PRESENT - NIGHT

Diego is seated beside his sleeping father as the doctor rushes in with Bernardo.

EL DOCTOR
(deeply distressed)
I have dreadful news.

CLOSER ON DIEGO

as Bernardo and the doctor move to him.

EL DOCTOR
I was mistaken. There isn't
another bottle of the serum in all
of El Pueblo.

DIEGO
Is there something else you can do
for him?

EL DOCTOR
I am sorry, Diego, but without the
serum...

CLOSE ON DIEGO

EL DOCTOR (O.S.)
...your father may not survive the
night.

As Diego reacts with deep distress, cut to...

TIGHT ON ALEJANDRO

asleep in bed, looking very ill. And as the MUSIC STINGS
we...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. ALEJANDRO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Diego, Bernardo and the doctor stand beside Alejandro's bed.

DIEGO

There must be something we can do
to help my father.

EL DOCTOR

I am sorry, Diego, but without the
serum there is little hope.

CLOSE ON DIEGO

He thinks for a beat, then cut...

WIDER

Diego suddenly grabs the bedpost to steady himself, holding
his free hand over his face with apparent grief. Bernardo
comforts him.

DIEGO

(feigning distress)

I...I do not have the strength to
watch my father in this condition.
I am sorry.

Diego hurries from the room as Bernardo and the doctor
exchange a concerned glance.

IN THE HALLWAY

Diego closes the door to his father's bedroom, puts his back
to the door. Suddenly his look of distress vanishes. He
moves quickly down the stairs and through...

THE LOWER HALLWAY

where he rushes into...

THE STUDY

There he moves to his secret lair entrance by the bookcase and
disappears into it. Then cut to...

ZORRO'S LAIR

A beat, then Diego enters and quickly begins to don his Zorro outfit. Then...

WIPE TO:

EXT. GULLY - NIGHT

As Zorro gallops out into the night on Toronado we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAND CANYONS - LATER THAT NIGHT

Zorro gallops into the secluded canyon and stops before a cave. He dismounts.

CLOSER ON CAVE ENTRANCE

ZORRO
(calls out)
Grey Owl!

A beat, then Grey Owl emerges from her cave.

GREY OWL
Zorro! What is wrong?

CLOSER ON GREY OWL

Zorro enters.

ZORRO
My father was bitten by a rattlesnake. His condition grows worse as we speak. My only hope is that you have some remedy.

GREY OWL
I believe I can help you. Come!

And as the two of them move o.s., cut...

INSIDE GREY OWL'S CAVE

Zorro enters with Grey Owl, watches as she moves to the spot she keeps her magic things, begins to mix several ingredients into a stone bowl.

CLOSER ON GREY OWL

She holds up a small ceramic jar and slowly pours a dark liquid out of her mixing bowl and into the jar.

WIDER TO INCLUDE ZORRO

She hands him the ceramic jar.

GREY OWL

If you can give this to your father in time it should save his life.

ZORRO

I cannot thank you enough Grey Owl.

Then Zorro turns and rushes out of the cave.

EXT. ON GREY OWL'S CAVE - NIGHT

As Zorro gallops off on Toronado...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE LAIR - NIGHT

Zorro gallops back into the lair, and...

WIPE TO:

INT. ALEJANDRO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bernardo and the doctor are at Alejandro's bedside. The doctor checks Alejandro's pulse. He glances up at Bernardo with a grim expression. Suddenly the door opens and Diego enters, moves to the doctor.

CLOSER ON DIEGO AND DOCTOR

Diego hands the ceramic jar to the doctor.

DIEGO

Doctor! Give this to my father, quickly!

EL DOCTOR

What is it?

DIEGO

A tribal potion.

EL DOCTOR

Diego, I know how much you want
your father to get well, but
tribal medicine...

DIEGO

I know you don't believe in it,
doctor, but we have nothing to
lose. Please!

EL DOCTOR

Very well.

CLOSER ON THE DOCTOR

He pours the dark liquid from the ceramic jar into a glass,
then leans over Alejandro, slowly getting him to swallow it.

WIDER ANGLE

The doctor rises, turns to Diego.

EL DOCTOR

All we can do now is wait.

The doctor exits the bedroom. PUSH IN as Diego takes a seat
beside his father once again. He holds his father's good
hand.

DIEGO

I wish there was something more I
could do for you, father. Perhaps
the end of my story will bring you
some small comfort.

CLOSE ON ALEJANDRO

DIEGO (O.S.)

With my lair, outfit and horse I
was ready to go out on my first
mission as Zorro!

RIPPLE DISSOLVE TO:

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS OVER POUNDING MUSIC:

...TIGHT ON ZORRO'S LEFT FOREARM as he pulls on his black
glove with one swift yank. And cut to...

...TIGHT ON ZORRO'S LEFT HIP as he slides his sword into his scabbard with the ring of steel. Then FAST PAN to his right hip as he snaps his whip onto his belt. And cut to...

...TIGHT ON ZORRO'S BARE RIGHT FOREARM (glove on hand) as Bernardo's hands strap on a strange brass device, then quickly pull Zorro's black shirt sleeve over it. And cut to...

...TIGHT ON ZORRO'S NECK as he tucks his medallion into his shirt. And cut to...

...TIGHT ON ZORRO'S FACE as he ties on his mask. And cut to...

...MEDIUM SHOT OF ZORRO FROM BEHIND as he whips his cape around him, then spins around, hands on hips, to reveal himself as Zorro for the first time. And as the MUSIC CRESCENDOS we cut to...

EXT. GULLY - ON LAIR ENTRANCE - NIGHT

And as Zorro gallops out on Toronado we...

WIPE TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Several townspeople react as Zorro gallops down the street on Toronado, heading toward the garrison.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(walla)

Who was that? / I don't know. /
I've never seen him before.

INSIDE THE GARRISON COURTYARD

Montecero stands before the three soldiers (Herrera, Rivas and Camacho). Beside them is a large supply wagon (with two horses) overflowing with dozens of sacks of grain, kegs of blasting powder and crates full of shiny new swords.

MONTECERO

You have done an excellent job,
men. With supplies like these...

(laughing to himself)

...at the ridiculously low prices
the Crown must pay for them, I
will gain promotion very quickly.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Montecero and the others react as Zorro gallops through the open garrison gates and abruptly stops before them.

ZORRO

Not if I can help it, Capitán!

CLOSER ON MONTECERO AND THREE SOLDIERS

as Zorro steps into shot before them.

MONTECERO

And who are you?

ZORRO

Someone you will be getting to know quite well I am afraid.

CLOSE ON ZORRO

ZORRO

Think of me as a fox keeping an eye on the chicken coop. Your chicken coop, Capitán!

WIDER ANGLE

The three soldiers draw their swords, surrounding Zorro like they did the grizzly and Diego before. In the background we can see several townspeople look in through the garrison gates.

CAMACHO

It is not a very clever fox that allows himself to be surrounded by three vicious dogs. Ha, ha, ha!

ZORRO

And even less clever dogs that let themselves be blinded by the fox.

The three soldiers charge Zorro, who swiftly whips off his cape and swings it behind him, covering Rivas and Herrera.

RIVAS & HERRERA

(muffled cries)

Aahhh! Uuuhh!

Then Zorro whips his sword out with blinding speed, catching Camacho's blade and dueling with him. He forces Camacho back,

spins his sword, sending Camacho's sword flying into the air. Then...

MONTECERO

shouts an order:

MONTECERO

GET HIM!

HERRERA AND RIVAS

claw Zorro's cape off themselves, then train their swords at Zorro. They begin to duel with Zorro, forcing him back against a stucco wall. Suddenly Herrera and Rivas swing their swords at once, hitting Zorro's blade from both directions, snapping it in two.

HERRERA

Next time you should use a better sword, my unfortunate friend.

ZORRO

I understand you have some very high quality ones.

Zorro quickly grabs his whip and lashes it out between Herrera and Rivas. And...

THE END OF THE WHIP

encircles a dozen of the swords in the wagon. And the whip is yanked back, sending the swords flying at...

HERRERA AND RIVAS

dramatically pinning them to the stucco wall on either side of Zorro (by their uniforms). Then Zorro grabs one of the swords out of the wall, whips it through the air, testing it's quality.

ZORRO

Fine quality, indeed!

ANOTHER ANGLE - ZORRO AND MONTECERO

Montecero draws his sword, faces Zorro.

MONTECERO

Indeed! Now let us see if you are as good as your blade!

Montecero begins to duel with Zorro, who easily deflects his blows. Montecero begins to grow more tense as Zorro smiles and remains relaxed.

ZORRO

It appears I am better with my blade than you are with your bluster.

Montecero angrily fights forward again, making a sudden thrust at Zorro's chest. Then cut...

CLOSE ON THE GOLD MEDALLION

around Zorro's neck as the tip of Montecero's sword strikes it, preventing Zorro from being harmed.

WIDER

Zorro quickly whips his sword around, knocking Montecero's blade away. Zorro quickly duels back harder still, forcing Montecero back into...

THE SIDE OF THE SUPPLY WAGON

where he loses his footing and falls. Montecero reacts with fear as Zorro places his blade on Montecero's chest.

MONTECERO

Please! Have mercy on me!

ANGLE THROUGH GARRISON GATE

as the townspeople look in at Zorro and Montecero.

ZORRO

I shall, Capitán, but only if you have mercy on the citizens of El Pueblo.

CLOSER ON MONTECERO

MONTECERO

Wh-who are you?

MONTECERO'S POV: UP ANGLE ON ZORRO

ZORRO

I am...El Zorro!

Zorro whips his sword right past camera.

WIDER ON MONTECERO

He ducks as the Zorro's blade slashes right, left, right over his head, cutting the famous "Z" into one of the bags of grain above Montecero. PUSH IN on Montecero as the grain pours down onto his head.

WIDER ON COURTYARD

Suddenly a half-dozen more soldiers come out of the garrison, heading toward Zorro.

CLOSER ON ZORRO

He raises his arm toward them, pulls back his sleeve to reveal the device Bernardo made for him. Zorro presses a trigger device in the palm of his hand, firing several brass balls o.s. as he pans his arm. Then cut back to...

THE ADVANCING SOLDIERS

as the brass balls shoot into shot, hitting the ground before them, bursting into clouds of smoke.

SOLDIERS

(coughing walla)

WIDER ON GARRISON COURTYARD

Zorro leaps up into Toronado's saddle, grabs the supply wagon reins. Then he looks down at Montecero, who is on the ground beside the wagon.

ZORRO

If you try to steal anything else
from the people, you will hear
from me again, Capitán.

(whips reins)

Hyah!

Zorro gallops out of the garrison, towing the wagon full of grain, powder and swords.

EXT. GARRISON GATES

Several townspeople look on as Zorro gallops out of the garrison in the supply wagon, roaring past them.

TOWNSPEOPLE
 (cheering walla)
 Did you hear that? / He's one of
 us!

ANGLE ON MONTECERO

He gets up, his uniform dusty and disheveled.

TOWNSPEOPLE (O.S.)
 Viva El Zorro! Viva El Zorro!

PUSH IN as he looks off toward o.s. Zorro with bitter
 resentment.

MONTECERO
 I will get that cursed outlaw, no
 matter what it takes!

RIPPLE DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ALEJANDRO'S BEDROOM - THE PRESENT - NIGHT

Where Diego is still seated beside his sleeping father.

DIEGO
 And that, father, is how I became
 El Zorro!

Diego looks at his father for a long moment, then lets his
 head fall as if giving up hope.

DIEGO
 (choking up)
 Dear father.

Suddenly Alejandro stirs.

ALEJANDRO
 (soft moan)

Diego's head instantly comes up.

DIEGO
 Father?!

PUSH IN on Alejandro as his eyes flutter open. He looks up at
 Diego with a weak sense of recognition.

ALEJANDRO

(weakly)

Diego?

HIS POV: BLURRY HEAD AND SHOULDERS

The image comes part way into focus, appearing to be Zorro in hat and mask. Then it goes back out of focus, and finally focuses sharply to reveal it is Diego.

DIEGO

Yes, it's me, father.

TIGHT TWO SHOT - DIEGO AND ALEJANDRO

ALEJANDRO

I had the most incredible dream.
You were Zorro and you saved me
from the jaws of death.

DIEGO

Father, there's something I need
to tell you.

Diego looks at his father for a long moment.

ALEJANDRO

Yes, what is it, my son?

Diego suddenly sits more upright, expands his chest, taking on the strong persona of Zorro.

DIEGO

I am really...
(he smiles warmly)
...so glad that you are going to
get well.

Diego hugs his father. Then PAN OVER to the window where we see the full moon. PUSH IN through the window on the moon on the horizon. And as the silhouetted image of Zorro on Toronado fades up over the moon like a ghost, then fades away again, we...

FADE OUT

THE END

ZORRO

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Written

by

Jeffrey Scott

SECOND DRAFT

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