



## Isabel Allende

**Zorro**  
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**The narrator addresses the reader directly at transition points in *Zorro*. Why did you decide to introduce the narrator's voice into your novel in this way?**

Talking directly to the reader, as if in a conversation, is a tricky thing because it may sound awkward. However, I thought that in this case it would create suspense. The reader would ask him or herself, Who is this narrator? Also, it established an ironic tone, which I needed for the novel.

**What research did you do to establish your fictional characters in California, Spain, and the Caribbean in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries?**

I usually research thoroughly. I consult books and the Internet; I watch movies to get an idea of the clothes and ways of life. It took me six months of intense research to be able to write the book. I needed a lot of information about sailing ships, Indians, Gypsies, secret societies, fencing, politics in Europe, etc.

**You are better known for writing literary fiction than adventure novels. How did you decide to take on the legend of Zorro in this novel?**

The character of Zorro is owned by Zorro Productions. Three people from that company came to me in the summer of 2003 and asked me to write a novel about Zorro. I thought about it and decided that because the historical period is so fascinating, I could come up with an original story about Zorro.

**Were there any special challenges you faced in choosing Zorro, a cultural figure widely known, as the hero of your book?**

The challenge was to imagine something that had not been done before. I knew it would not be easy because so much had already been said about him in comic books, TV and movies. But little had been said about his childhood and youth. Why and how does a boy become Zorro?

**Your critics have described *Zorro* as "one of those rare and perfect matches of subject and author." To what extent do you agree with this observation, and did you feel especially connected to the fictional character of Zorro as you wrote?**

I asked the people from Zorro Productions why they thought of me to write this book and they said because I am Hispanic, I know the Spanish culture (I even write in Spanish!), I have written a book about California and the Gold Rush (*Daughter of Fortune*), and the theme of justice has always been present in my books. I have also written Young Adult fiction, so I have some experience with action heroes and adventure. From my side I can say that I have always loved Zorro because he is brave and smart, he is not particularly violent, he is playful, histrionic, and eternally young. He risks his life to help the underdog but he does it with a lighthearted and ironic attitude. There is nothing tragic about him. He is fun!