

Combined Powers

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Summary: Clark is stuck in Zorro's time. He needs to find his Lois, but while Clark is there, Victoria disappears also. Clark needs to convince Zorro to work together in order to save the women they love more than life itself. Follow Clark (Superman) and Zorro on their adventure. A crossover between *New World Zorro* and *Lois & Clark*. There is no need to be familiar with Lois and Clark!

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Chapter 1

It was a day like any other day in Metropolis, the usual crimes solved by the city's hero in tights, Superman.

At the editorial office of the newspaper the *Daily Planet*, Lois was looking at the desk of her partner, Clark Kent. Her partner had vanished yet again with some strange excuse... she was used to that by now. She didn't care, really, as long as he managed to bring in the scoops and the exclusives with Superman. She was happy enough to accept his reasons; that alone was strange for a reporter like Lois Lane. She had questioned the reasons at the start of their partnership, but stopped from the moment that she noticed that Clark always managed to be in the right place, at the right time.

Clark was more than her partner at work. He was Lois' best friend, one of the few friends she had, really. She trusted him as much with her life as she trusted Superman. She even started to admit to herself that she was falling for her partner and best friend. The only thing holding her back was her fear of giving her heart again, caused by the whole Luthor disaster. She was dreaming about her partner and about Superman when her phone snapped her out of those thoughts.

"Lois Lane," she answered, still a little dreaming.

"Miss Lane, this is Bobby Bigmouth," said a voice on the other end of the line. Bobby Bigmouth was one of her snitches.

Lois was on full alert the moment she heard the voice of that particular snitch. "What can I do for you, Bobby?"

"I have information on why Superman wasn't able to save Lex Luthor," a voice boomed through the phone.

"You got my full attention, what do you have for me," asked Lois, hoping for the scoop that could earn her a Pulitzer.

"Not over the phone, meet me at our usual alley and don't forget my dessert this time."

"All right, all right, I will be there as soon as I can!"

"You will not regret it!" said Bobby, before breaking off their conversation.

Meanwhile, in the alley behind one of Metropolis' best restaurants...

"I did it, she's on her way, now give me the money," Bobby said to the mysterious man in front of him.

"Sorry, I don't want any witnesses!" The man with brown hair, dressed in a futuristic blue and silver suit, laughed before he shot Bobby down. The mysterious man took his place into the shadows so he could ambush Lois easily.

"I will stop those Utopias once and for all. I will become the legend and those heroes will be nothing more than a footnote in history. I will finally rule the world!" laughed the mysterious man from his place in the shadows.

His waiting was rewarded though when Lois came running

into the alley without her partner.

Her bags of food hit the floor when she saw Bobby lying there in a pool of his own blood.

"Bobby?" She ran towards him to check his pulse when she felt a gun at her back.

"No need to check his pulse, Miss Lane. I assure you, Bobby is dead."

Lois flinched. She knew that voice anywhere. "Tempus!" she said, the fear noticeable in her voice.

"Very good, Miss Lane. Don't bother calling for your big blue friend, I sent him to China." Tempus laughed.

"Now if you please take a seat, Miss Lane, we are going for a little trip. Don't try anything foolish, I could easily kill you now and be done with it, but what is the fun in that? I first want to play a little game and make those pathetic heroes suffer."

"Heroes?" It was the only thing she had managed to ask him.

"Oh don't worry, you won't be alone for long! You will get company soon enough!" he said while he sat next to her on the time machine.

Los Angeles 1820

Victoria was sweeping her porch as she talked with her best friend Diego, who was just about to leave, when the sky lighted up for a few seconds. Diego's horse, Esperanza, startled together with Felipe's Pinto.

"It's all right, girl, it is over now."

"What was that?" asked Victoria.

"I don't know, Victoria, it is not our typical lightning and it hasn't rained in days. I never saw anything like it. Maybe I can look it up in one of my books though," answered Diego before he rode off with Felipe on his heels.

A little out of the pueblo they slowed down again. "I have a bad feeling about this, Felipe! I don't know what it was, but it can't be good. Let's keep our eyes open, I have a feeling Zorro will be needed soon."

Meanwhile in an abandoned farmhouse deep in the deserts from Los Angeles...

"Where are we?" asked Lois.

"You will know soon enough, there are two Utopias that prevent world domination in the future and there are two heroes who need to be eliminated to rule it all, your Superman being one of them."

"Who is the other one?" Lois' voice was filled with fear but she needed to know, maybe it could give her a clue about where she was.

"Never heard of the legendary Zorro, the fox of the night, my dear?" laughed Tempus evilly.

"Don't you my dear me—" Lois stopped to think of what Tempus just told her. "Wait a minute, did you just say Zorro, the legendary fox of the night? That means..." Lois was shocked by the thought that she was trapped in Zorro's time, trapped in the 1800s.

"I knew you were a smart woman, Lois! Now be good, I will need to go to the next village to see if I can get some supplies, or better yet... someone who can work for me!"

Meanwhile in Metropolis 1993

Clark Kent came running into the editorial office of the *Daily Planet*.

"Jimmy, where is Lois?"

A young man with brown hair turned to him from his place at his computer. "I don't know, CK, she ran out to meet one of her informants, Bobby Bigmouth, but that was hours ago," said Jimmy, noticing how pale Clark had become. Clark was about to turn around, but Jimmy made him stop in his tracks. "What is wrong, CK?"

Clark turned back towards Jimmy. "They found Bobby Bigmouth, dead!"

That alone shocked the young man, but he managed to ask,

“What about Lois?”

Clark shook his head. “No trace of Lois, I was hoping to find her here! I need to get a hold of Superman. If you find any trace of Lois, Jimmy, call me on my cell phone, I am going to look for her!”

Jimmy nodded, too startled to say anything more.

Clark started his investigation with the alley that they usually used to meet with Bobby, the same alley where Bobby was found hours ago.

He spun around, wearing the famous blue, red, and yellow suit.

Superman searched the city for hours, but with no trace of Lois, he listened carefully for her voice, but he never heard her.

He landed on the porch of his apartment and spun back into Clark, hoping that her handbag would give him some clues. He wouldn't stop searching until he found her.

A knock on the door stopped his search for a minute. He walked towards the door and saw an older man with glasses and derby on his head.

“Can I help you, sir?” asked Clark.

Chapter 2

At his door stood a man with nicely cut, dark gray hair coming from underneath his bowler hat. He was a middle-aged man with little round glasses on his nose, wearing a suit that was in fashion in the early 1900s.

“Hi, Mister Kent, my name is H.G. Wells, I am here to help you. Can I come in, please?” the man with the English accent asked.

Clark moved out of the way to let the man pass.

“H.G. Wells like the writer H.G. Wells?” Clark asked the man with the gray mustache.

Wells looked at his golden pocket watch, there was no time to lose. Lois was in grave danger and Victoria would soon be if they didn't move fast.

“Well, yes that is me, but we have no time to lose now, we need to save Lois from Tempus!”

It was like time stopped at that moment or it felt that way to Clark anyway.

“What happened to Lois? Where is she and who is this Tempus?”

Wells laughed, a little shy. “You don't remember it, but Tempus tried to kill you when you were a baby and we traveled back to the moment you landed on Earth to stop him. I imprisoned him in the future, but he escaped. How he did it we have no clue, but what I do know is that he wants to rule the world, therefore he needs to stop the utopia your love story created, and therefore he wants to break you two up before you would be able to tie the knot.”

Clark was stunned, he always thought that he had dreamed that. Lois clearly forgot it too, she never mentioned knowing that he was Superman. Yes, he was able to take away the envelope where she had written it down on, but... His train of thought stopped when he thought of the woman who had to accept being his girl only yesterday.

“What happened to Lois? Where did he take her?” Clark was beginning to become impatient. Here they were, chatting while Lois was god knows where, with a dangerous criminal who had access to stuff he'd never heard of, things that needed to be invented in his time.

“You see, Mr. Kent, there is another story just like yours and Lois, a story that became a legend, some even think it is a myth. Have you ever heard of the legend of the fox of the night? The legend of Zorro and his love, Victoria Escalante?” Clark remembered the legend that his mother used to tell him before he went to bed when he was a young child.

“I heard of the son of a rich man who was studious by day, but

when there was trouble he would don the black mask and turn into Zorro, riding a half-wild stallion. He defended the poor against the tyranny of their local mayor, their Alcalde. Just a normal man with a special gift, not an alien with superpowers like me. He fell in love with a beautiful tavern owner. Their love is legendary and he is a big example for me, it is a legend with the same values and one I am gladly trying to live by. But what has this to do with Lois?”

Wells laughed shyly. “Well, Mr. Kent, Tempus has taken Lois to the time and place of Zorro. He wants to end the two love stories at the same time and rule the world.”

“Come on, let's go!” There was no time to lose now.

“My time machine is in the alley behind this apartment. One more thing, Mr. Kent, be careful, we are going to the early 1800s — 1820 to be exact. You will need to conceal your powers as you conceal them in this time, but I wouldn't recommend you turn into Superman there, it would jeopardize our mission to save Lois.”

Clark just nodded before they left his apartment to travel back in time.

Los Angeles 1820...

It was market day in the Pueblo de Los Angeles, the busiest day for everyone with a business. Tavern Victoria was full with caballeros who wanted to sell some cattle on the monthly cattle auction, or caballeros who were interested in buying some of that cattle, vaqueros who had been helping their patrons, housemaids buying vegetables and other things needed for the house of their patron, and last but not least, the travelers. It was also the day that the coach arrived with hopefully some overnight guests. Although it was busy, it seemed to be a peaceful day today, no real need for Zorro, although Diego De La Vega would be in the pueblo the whole day just in case, and with the woman he secretly loved so much.

He loved the woman who loved the man that was wearing a mask, the hero of the people. She was in love with Zorro. Yes, he was the man behind the mask, but she didn't love him. She loved the legend, she loved the mask, not the man of flesh and blood. Or so that was what he thought of it, and that was one of the reasons that he never shared his secret with her. The other reason was that it would be too dangerous for her to know; she couldn't tell what she didn't know, but every bandit of the area knew she was involved with the legendary fox of the night, so being used as bait was becoming a habit for her. She was no big fan of the reasons he gave her, but she never told him that, not yet anyway. She was too afraid of scaring him off.

I am going to try and find out myself who Zorro is! thought Victoria while she occupied herself in the kitchen. On days like this, she had no time to mingle with her customers. She needed to prepare the food they ordered and let Maria or Pilar handle the rest.

It was around the time when the stagecoach arrived that a strange man — dressed in Madrid's latest fashion, clearly not a poor man — walked into the tavern with his head held high and with a thought that nobody could touch him. Clearly a traveler, because he had just paid the usual travelers tax to Mendoza, who like always sat on the porch of the tavern, drinking at the expense of Diego De La Vega. It was the easiest way to get all the information Diego needed without rousing suspicions, because Diego knew that Mendoza thought of him as a friend. Of course, Diego thought of Mendoza the same way. Being friends with Mendoza meant knowing what went on in the pueblo because Mendoza talked way too much.

“Can you bring me the owner of this tavern, señorita? I want a room for the night!” said the stranger to Maria without even looking at her. It was clear that this man had a low opinion of women.

He will be in for a rude awaking if he handles Victoria like

that! Maria thought before nodding and leaving to get Victoria.

“Victoria, there is a man inside who wants to speak to the owner, he wants a room for the night. I guess he doesn’t trust me enough,” said Maria to her boss.

Victoria sighed. She hated such men, but it was a paying customer and she needed the money.

Victoria walked through the curtains trying to be as polite as possible.

“Can I help you, señor?” she asked the stranger with a little edge in her voice. Her tavern was full with paying costumers, and it was almost noon so most of them had ordered something to eat.

“I asked for the owner, señorita! I want a room for the night. Where is your patron?”

Victoria took a deep breath and answered, a little annoyed, “I am the owner, señor!”

The stranger looked down on Victoria, his eyes going up and down. His attitude was downright mean. “Don’t make me laugh, little girl, now go get your boss, you have no idea who you are dealing with here! I am a personal friend of the king himself!”

Okay, this was the last straw for Victoria. Nobody would treat her like that and live with it.

“Listen here, you, I am the owner whether you like it or not! You can choose to stay here and change your attitude towards me and my girls or you can walk out and sleep in the sand, because frankly I don’t care if you were the king of Spain himself, nobody talks to me that way! And for the record, I am the only inn in this area, it is your choice.”

“Nobody talks to me like that, señorita.” The strange man took Victoria by the arm and raised his other hand.

This was the signal for Diego — who had changed his place outside for his favorite place inside — to stand up like any other male in there, ready to defend the love of his life, in any way he could without making him suspicious. He was ready to react when another unfamiliar voice rang through the tavern. “Let her go now, this woman is only doing her job and where I come from, we treat such beautiful women with the respect they deserve.”

The man let go of her arm and pushed her in direction of the voice. Victoria didn’t want to pass the man again so she took cover behind the man that saved her.

The man had black hair and a broad chest, he was wearing a hat unfamiliar to her and he spoke with an American accent. His arms crossed over his chest, a pose he liked to think of as the Superman pose.

“You are looking for a fight, señor, over such a wench!”

Diego was starting to get really angry by now. *Who was this so-called friend of the king of Spain, and who was this man defending his girl!* was all that went through his mind.

“I am not looking for a fight, sire, but I don’t run either. I just want to warn you that we need to treat women with respect!”

Who is this handsome man! was the only thing Victoria could think about. She was sure happy that he had chosen this moment to enter her tavern.

Chapter 3

Victoria watched anxiously from behind the handsome, muscular stranger that had just walked into her tavern. She was comforted by a smaller man who had entered her tavern with him, an older man with a different accent and a bowler hat.

“You can trust him, miss!” was the only thing he had said before the visitor spoke again.

“You have no idea who you are dealing with, amigo!”

Clark laughed. “First of all, I chose my friends and you aren’t one of them. And as for ‘I don’t know who I am dealing with,’ I have only one response for you: neither do you!”

The mean visitor took a step towards Clark. “Do I need to be afraid of you, muscle-boy? I am don Carano, the king’s best friend. You wouldn’t dare to touch me!”

Clark took a step towards don Carano, something he usually didn’t do, his arms still crossed over his muscular chest.

Victoria looked up when she heard Wells’ reaction. “Oh boy!”

Carano pulled out his gun to prove his point, the point that he could get away with everything.

Everybody in the tavern reacted, stunned. Everybody except Clark, who took yet another step forward.

“Another step and I will—” He was too shocked to continue when he noticed that his gun was gone and now in the hands of his enemy.

Clark had taken the gun without the use of super-speed — just a quick reflex in human-speed — but what he did next stunned everyone. He took the gun and he bent the steel like it was a piece of paper.

Don Carano was shocked. For the first time in his life he was afraid enough to back down.

Clark knew that he had won this battle with only showing some super-strength that could easily be explained without giving away his heritage.

Clark was glad that the man never pulled the trigger; the fact that bullets bounced off his chest would be more difficult to explain.

He knew he had reacted seriously out of character, but nobody knew Superman, so there was no reason to act like he was too mild-mannered. He could react more like himself... although he knew how superstitious people were in this time, so no flying.

Victoria was stunned when she saw Clark bending the gun. *Could he be the one she was looking for?* Victoria shook her thoughts away. She would take a good look at the man — he was muscular yes, he defended the poor, but he had no mustache.

She took this opportunity of peace to run towards her best friend. She felt safe with Clark and Wells, but they were still strangers; she knew Diego by heart, and there was no one she trusted more than Diego, not counting Zorro that is.

Diego took this opportunity and pulled Victoria behind him. He, too, didn’t know what to think of the strangers who defended the love of his life.

“Now,” Clark continued, “if you want a place to sleep, please apologize to the lovely señorita!” He pointed towards the place Victoria had taken now in Diego’s embrace.

“My apologies for my behavior, señorita, my attitude was rude because I am not used to such a modern woman. Can I have a room for the night please?” he snarled between his teeth, not sounding very sincere.

Victoria was a strong woman and as much as it pained her, he did apologize and she was a forgiving person. “All right,” she responded, “but I don’t want to hear anything from my girls that you were rude to them or you will sleep on the street! The quartel is right in front of the tavern so I don’t need to go far for help!” She nodded towards Pilar, who started to climb the stairs to get the room ready for their overnight guest. When she noticed that the man was following Pilar at a distance, she knew he would behave for now.

Victoria left Diego’s embrace and walked over to the young man who had defended her from don Carano. “Thank you very much for what you just did, señor...”

Clark laughed. “Kent. Clark Kent, and this is my friend Mr. Wells. It is quite all right, señorita... Euhm?”

“Sorry, I am señorita Victoria Escalante and this is my best friend don Diego De La Vega,” she said, pointing towards a large young man in a baby blue suit with black embroidery.

“Buenos dias, señor De La Vega, señorita Escalante. I hope I don’t need to sleep on the street now that he apologized, do you still have rooms for me and my friend?”

Victoria smiled towards the gentlemen. “You are in luck, señores, I have two rooms left. I will send Maria and make sure they are ready for you.”

“Is it possible to hire them for a few nights?” asked Clark not knowing how long he would need to find his Lois.

Victoria smiled again, she was really taken by the handsome stranger. Diego noticed this too and started to get a little jealous by it. It was the first time she smiled at a man like that who wasn't Zorro. Being jealous of his alter-ego was hard enough, seeing her smile at a stranger was even harder.

“Certainly, señor, can I offer you some enchiladas with chicken as a thank you?” she said with all the gratefulness in her voice.

“That is too kind, señorita, but I am willing to pay for my food, that is no problem at all.”

Victoria shook her head. “No, these are from the house.”

“Well please, let me thank you then.” He took Victoria's hand and placed his lips on her knuckles.

“And please call me Clark!”

“All right, Clark, let me make those enchiladas, I will be right back. Do you want some too, Diego?”

Diego nodded. “That would be nice, Victoria, thank you. Please, gentlemen, join me for lunch?” Diego pointed with a flat hand toward the empty bench he occupied earlier.

Clark looked towards H.G. Wells, who nodded back.

“That would be great, thank you, don Diego.” Diego wanted to know everything that could be known from these strangers, who were obviously Americans.

Chapter 4

Miles and miles further into the desert in an abandoned farmhouse...

“You will not get away with this, Tempus! Superman will find me and you will be sorry!”

Tempus laughed. “I hope so, my dear, I hope so. You see, in order to kill your love story I need to get rid of you or him. What would be the best for me, you think? An annoying, dead reporter, a pesky dead superhero or two, or both?”

“You are going to kill us both, aren't you? Wait a minute. A hero or two?” asked Lois, her reporter instinct coming to the surface.

“Oh, so you think you two are the only couple who are in my way of ruling the world? Why do you think I brought you here?” Tempus laughed again. “The legend of the fox of the night and his Victoria ring a bell?”

Lois was shocked. “Do you mean we are in early 1800?”

“Tsk, tsk, tsk, aren't we a little too curious, Miss Lane? Don't worry, you will have some company soon enough.” Tempus laughed while he walked away from her. He hoped that the man whom he had hired would do his job right and bring Victoria to him, alive and well! He needed live bait.

Tempus turned back around. “Oh, and before I forget, I have a little something for you to wear when your hero comes to your aid.” He tied her mouth again and placed a necklace around her neck, with a green stone in the center. “And to treat everybody equally I had one made for your future companion too. Bye for now, Miss Lane.”

Lois was left alone again with no way to escape, her hands tied at a large wooden beam and her feet tied close to each other.

For the first time in a long time she was afraid. Afraid that she would never see Clark again and even more afraid for Superman's life, but she had no way of warning him with her mouth taped shut.

She was glad she wore a suit skirt for the summer with the hot desert sun glowing on the roof of the abandoned house she was captured in. She looked around as far as she could, but only saw a small kitchen and a bunk bed.

She leaned her head against the wooden beam, watching above her, thinking about what she was about to lose if Tempus got his way, and seeing the stone around her neck she was hoping

that Superman would run into Zorro before they were able to capture this other woman.

Her thoughts went to her boyfriend, she laughed at the thought that she had lost her heart to that farmboy out Kansas, never, in a hundred years had she thought she would fall in love so hard as she had now.

Her other thoughts went to her best friend, Superman. She prayed that he wouldn't come on his own.

Please be careful, Superman, and please let me see Clark again! These were the last thoughts before Lois lost consciousness due to the heat.

Chapter 5

Clark was floating a few inches over his bed, it wouldn't be the first time he ended up against the ceiling in the morning, lying on his back, his arms crossed over his naked chest.

He normally would sleep in his boxers, but had chosen to keep his pants on, it was like he knew he would be needed this night, his glasses on the little table across the room.

The mild-mannered reporter was a deep sleeper, but there was one thing that would wake him up in an instant.

“Help me, somebody help me please—” Clark was startled awake by the sounds of someone screaming for help. He was shocked, that was the voice of Victoria, he jumped from the height he was floating onto the wooden floor and ran out of the door in the direction of the sound. He stopped in front of the door, hearing her call for help again through the door. “Help me, somebody help me please.”

Clark forced the door open, Wells — who had heard the calls too — now right behind him.

Meanwhile, outside the tavern, a few guards were dozing off at their waiting-post. A lonely rider, dressed in black, wearing a mask and riding a beautiful, black stallion — a man known as Zorro — watched the guards, who were dozing off around the corner. He needed to get from one side of the plaza to the other side of the plaza.

“We need to be quiet, old boy, we don't want to disturb their bedtime,” the fox whispered to his stallion with the name Toronado.

Toronado was a special horse, one of a kind. He wasn't only very fast and well-trained, Toronado was also smart and could understand everything Zorro said to him. One could think of him as a human in the body of a horse.

The stallion nodded in agreement and lifted his hooves in slow motion one at the time. He sneaked past the guards and over the plaza like a tiger that was sneaking up on prey, careful to not make any sound that could alarm the soldiers.

It was a success Zorro reached the rear of the tavern without the slightest sound. He stood up straight in the saddle, using the back of his seventeen-hands tall stallion. Toronado was used to it by now and stood perfectly still until his master was out of sight, as a step up to reach the open window above him. These windows were always open and gave access to a room behind the kitchen, that way he could jump through an open space in the kitchen, a route that Victoria thought of as Zorro's exit.

Clark stepped into Victoria's room, he saw don Carano struggling with Victoria, one hand over her mouth now and his other arm around her neck. The mean don stood with his back towards the door, not noticing that Clark had taken place in the doorway his arms crossed over his still naked chest. “You have five seconds to release the señorita.” Clark's voice was cold and hard, he should have known that he was going to try something. “One...”

don Carano whirled around still holding the tavern owner in his grasp. “You again...” growled Carano.

Clark didn't react and continued his counting while he blocked the easy exit through the door. “Two... three...”

don Carano threw Victoria in a corner of her room. She fell with her head against the little table in the corner of her room, losing consciousness almost immediately.

Carano took some fast steps towards Clark with a clenched fist. He took a swing, making sure that Clark would be out in one hit. He aimed for the chin but the dark-haired young man took a step aside right before his nemesis made contact, making him stumble a few steps backward.

Clark used that time to take quick look at Victoria and used his super-hearing to listen to her heartbeat. He let out a sigh of relief to know that she had passed out.

“Herb, you take care—” He felt a hit on his chest, the sound of a ring hitting a piece of steel resounded through the room. The moment Carano’s fist hit Clark’s chest, he shook his hand and looked at it. It was bruised, maybe broken even from this one hit. Carano was really shocked now; he hadn’t seen that coming. Clark turned around and hit his chin just hard enough to make him fly through the railing, landing one floor below at the feet of a masked man in black.

Seeing Clark standing there, Zorro kneeled down next to the don. “He is still alive!” he yelled towards Clark. The man of steel nodded in response. Zorro took the rope he knew Victoria kept behind her bar, it wasn’t the first time someone left the tavern tied up.

The fox tied the man on a big wooden beam before he ran up the stairs thinking *he is not going to take Victoria away from me, not as long as I am alive*. The thoughts were strange to him. Never in his whole life had he felt jealous of another man until Clark entered their lives, and now there he was in her bedroom, sweeping her off her feet. *I still think there is something strange about the man*.

Zorro arrived at her room and was shocked by what he saw. There in the corner of her room was his Victoria with a wound on the side of her head, Clark’s hand on her chin as he looked at the wound on her head. It was time to make his presence known.

“Victoria, Querida, are you alright? What happened here?” asked Zorro trying to keep the jealous edge out of his voice. He succeeded towards Wells and Victoria, but not for Clark’s super-hearing.

“There was a man that attacked me, and would have taken me away if it wasn’t for these men.”

“The noise came from the tavern, come on, let’s take a look.” A voice boomed outside the tavern. The soldiers were on their way.

“Soldiers!” whispered Zorro. “I’d better make my leave, my presence will only complicate matters.”

Clark stood up and placed a hand on Zorro’s shoulder. “Don’t worry, I will keep her safe as best as I can when I am around. I am glad I could prevent her from suffering the same fate as my girlfriend.”

Zorro nodded. “For Victoria’s safety, I am in your debt. Thank you for what you did — I will do anything I can to help and find your girlfriend.” Zorro took his leave and it was just in time because he had just closed the curtains of the kitchen when a knock could be heard on the door. “Open up, now, that is an order!”

“One minute, please!” yelled Clark. “Herb, would you be so kind to open the door, I will make sure that she gets down in one piece.”

Wells stepped up from his place beside Victoria and walked down and past Carano, who was tied up downstairs.

Clark reached out a hand to help Victoria stand up, but she fell against him the moment she tried to take a step forward. “I think my ankle is sprained or broken.”

Clark looked with his x-ray vision at her ankle; it wasn’t broken. “I don’t think it’s broken, but I will carry you down if you want, that way you don’t need to use it before the doctor has a

chance to look at it.”

Victoria nodded and placed her arms around Clark’s strong neck. After all, what woman would refuse the offer of being carried by a handsome strong man?

Clark swooped her up and started walking towards the stairs, noticing that it was already crowded when he walked down the stairs. He placed Victoria on one of the benches in her tavern just in time when the alcalde walked towards her.

“Señorita Escalante, could you tell me what has happened here?”

Victoria wanted to start her version of the story when Diego and his father walked in. Clark smiled a small smile when he saw him, a smile that said I should have known. He knew who Zorro was, but more importantly he knew what it was like, to see your loved one suffer as your alter-ego. He was glad he wasn’t an outlaw and hunted by the police, though.

“Victoria, are you all right?” Diego asked while hurrying towards her side.

“I am fine now, Diego, thank you,” she responded before turning her attention back to the alcalde.

“It was right at the moment I wanted to make my evening toilettes that a man knocked on my door. I opened the door slightly, but it was more than enough for Carano to push open my door and grab me by my neck. I was able to yell for help before the man shut me up, and was glad when I saw Mr. Kent and his friend appear, they made sure that he couldn’t take me away. That is when I passed out and I came back to my senses when the fight was over,” said Victoria to the alcalde who made sure that Mendoza had written everything down before his attention went to Clark.

“You are Mr. Kent, I presume?”

Clark nodded. “Yes, sire, I am Clark Kent and this is my friend Herbert George Wells.”

“You are not Spanish. Where are you from, señor?” asked the alcalde.

“I am from the Americas,” was his only response. He didn’t trust the man, so he only answered the questions, nothing more nothing less.

“Could you tell me your side of the story?”

Clark nodded. “I was asleep when I heard the calls for help. I followed the sound and opened the door, not knowing what I would find there.”

“I was right behind him,” said Wells in between.

Clark nodded. “Yes, I ordered them to let her go. He reacted and threw her in the corner of her room, he then went towards me with clenched fist. I just defended myself and hit him back and he fell down. We tied him up and made sure that the señorita regained consciousness. That’s when I brought her down, because she wasn’t able to stand on her feet.”

“That is exactly how it happened!” responded Wells to Clark’s story.

“All right, señor, that will be all,” Desoto said before he ordered his soldiers to take the prisoner to the quartel and left the tavern himself.

Diego kneeled down in front of Victoria. “Let me see that leg?”

Victoria showed her painful leg.

“It is badly sprained, not broken,” he said while bandaging her feet.

Victoria would be all right, for now...

Chapter 6

The morning came fast for everyone. Victoria wasn’t the only one who hadn’t slept after last night. Clark and Wells sat in the tavern eating breakfast, planning their next step in saving Lois. He didn’t know where to begin and he didn’t like it one bit. Worst of all, he needed to do everything at human-speed. The fact that they

were in the past was bad enough; the history books didn't need an extra flying man in it.

Diego walked into the tavern quite early that morning, something he rarely did at an hour this early, but Zorro had had a quiet night after what happened in the tavern.

He looked around him and noticed the two strange men eating their breakfast. Yes, he had offered to help them, but it was more because he wanted to see that nothing happened between Clark and Victoria. He was still certain that the stronger man of the two was trying to win Victoria's heart, and by all means he could succeed; he was the type Victoria could fall for if he really lived by the values he said he lived by. The man was strong and not afraid to use action when it was requested. *Weren't they looking for a missing person? Shouldn't they be searching already if this person was so damn important?* he asked himself while he walked past the bar, seeing Pilar instead of Victoria. He knew where he could find his heart if she wasn't behind her bar, she would be in the kitchen then.

"I need to take some action and soon before I lose her to that Americano, but what can I do, she only knew the studious Diego, no man of action at all, helpless with the sword or a gun." Diego shook those jealous thoughts to the back of his mind when he opened the curtains that separated the kitchen from the rest of the tavern.

Only a few people had the privilege to walk into her kitchen just for a chitchat in the morning, Diego was one of them.

The young De La Vega was like a brother to her, or so everyone, Diego included, thought.

She really liked Diego, even secretly loved him, but he could make that difficult sometimes. She could be so disappointed in him. Why didn't he take action, she asked herself, times like today. She snapped out of those thoughts when she heard her name in a distance.

"Buenos dias, Victoria."

"Oh, buenos dias, Diego. You are up early today."

"Yes, I haven't had much sleep, but how are you today?" he asked gently.

"I am fine, thank you, Diego, thanks to señor Kent and his friend. I wouldn't be here without him!"

Diego rolled his eyes. "Yes, lucky he walked in yesterday," he murmured underneath his breath, loud enough for Victoria to understand what he just said, hearing the jealous edge in his voice, the same jealous edge he had when she talked about Zorro a little too much for his liking.

Victoria groaned. She hated when he got this way and she wasn't going to let it pass this time.

"Stop being so immature, Diego De La Vega, I didn't see you take any action yesterday when the first events occurred, did I? But then again, Diego is no man of action, now is he?" growled Victoria. The disappointment could be heard in her voice.

Diego rolled his eyes and could only sigh. He wanted to take action, he wanted to do it with every fiber in his body, but there was no time to change into Zorro and he couldn't risk doing anything as Diego.

He had been lucky before when he made such an impulsive move and took action as Diego. He was going to run out of luck; someone would start to notice, and *that* he couldn't risk. His life depended on it.

"You are starting to sound like my father..." Diego sighed again but was stopped before he could continue.

"Good, at least someone sounds like him!" growled Victoria, smashing all her frustrations into the bread she was making.

"Why can't you and Father just accept the fact that I hate violence and that I can't wield a sword or shoot a gun!" Diego tried to keep his voice calm, and tried not to yell at her because he would sound too much like Zorro then, but she didn't know how hard it was not to yell that he was a man of action, that he was the

fox, and that that last remark had hurt him like hell.

In the meantime on the other side of the curtain...

Clark and Wells were busy talking through their plan when his super-hearing jumped in. He wasn't one to listen in on private conversations, but the fact that his super-hearing chose to jump in there needed to be something wrong. He needed Diego to trust him even he needed to tell the truth about himself.

It was at that moment that he heard a growl and saw Diego step outside the kitchen, clearly angry, before he walked outside the tavern and took off on his horse.

"Herb, watch Victoria. I am going after him!" Clark said while he stood up and ran outside. He could just see the direction he went, using his 'eye gizmo' like Lois would call it to follow the right horse tracks.

He found Diego at the edge of a ravine sitting on a large rock staring out at the ravine he had jumped with Toronado so many times. The young De La Vega snapped out of his thoughts when horse hooves neared him. He looked up to see Clark sitting on the horse the De La Vegas had lent him.

"What are you doing here?" snapped Diego.

"Aren't you supposed to comfort Victoria and take her further away from me?"

Clark sighed and stepped off his horse. He tied the horse to a nearby tree and walked towards the place Diego was sitting.

"Believe me, I am not here to take Victoria away from you, but if I were you, I should look out with those words. Those words could easily be your death sentence and what does Victoria have then? She will have lost her best friend and the man she loves."

"What do you mean?" asked Diego, trying to find out what the man knew. It couldn't be that the man knew he was Zorro, he had seen Zorro only one time, yesterday evening.

"Don't worry, Diego, I know exactly who you are, I will explain in a minute. You see, and I know it will be hard to believe what I am going to say next, but you see, I am living in the future and I try to live to standards set by you as a legend. I can't reveal too much of your future though. Anyway, my girlfriend was taken away from me by a man named Tempus, and he is hiding her in this timeline. I have reason to believe that he is after Victoria too."

Diego looked confused. "From the future, you say?"

Clark nodded and reached into his pocket to a photo he carried with him all the time. "Here, this is the woman I am looking for."

Diego smiled now while he looked at the picture. "I just wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to Victoria." Diego stood up now and looked around. "Let's start again," he said, while reaching out his hand.

Clark took the hand with one of his own. "Now, care to tell me what the hell was wrong earlier?"

Diego sat down again and sighed deeply. "You wouldn't understand."

"Try me," Clark challenged.

"You know what the hardest thing is from all of this? Seeing your girlfriend swooning over one side of you while she is disappointed in the other side. I want to yell every time that I am that same man but she wouldn't believe me."

Clark nodded. He knew that feeling better than he could tell Diego. "I can't reveal much, but I know that feeling better than you think."

Diego shook his head. "What the hell would you know about leading a double life?"

Clark smiled. "More than you could think possible."

"Let go of me help me, Mr. Wells please help me. No, let me go!" Clark's super-hearing jumped in.

"Don't ask me how I know, but we need to go now. I think there is trouble in the pueblo. I have a feeling that Victoria is in trouble!" Clark said before running towards his horse, with Diego on his heels.

“Go to the pueblo, I will be there as Zorro as soon as possible.”

Clark only nodded before they started their race against time.

In a Tavern in Santa Paula.

Tempus sat at a table waiting for the man who wanted to help destroy Zorro, for his own reasons clearly.

He hadn’t needed to wait long though, because a mean-looking man stepped towards him and took a seat in front of him.

“I solved the mistake and she should be on her way soon.”

Tempus laughed. “Good, remember you get Zorro and the bounty on his head, my reward will be waiting for me at home. Now let’s celebrate to the destruction of our enemies.” Tempus laughed, so sure that this time he would be on the winning side nothing could go wrong now.

Chapter 7

Earlier in the tavern...

Victoria was still frustrated about her talk with Diego. “Stupid Diego, why does he hate violence so much that even he wouldn’t jump in and help her! Aaaaagh!” Victoria groaned, still smashing the bread dough.

“Why wasn’t he more like Zorro, why couldn’t she be proud of him this once. He could marry every woman in this pueblo if he only would take some action from time to time!” She sighed as she parted the dough into several pieces. She needed to admit to herself, though, that she would be strict in who would marry Diego. Not everybody would be good enough for Diego though, no matter how many fights they had or would have in the future, no matter how disappointed she was in him.

“Why the heck am I so disappointed anyway, yes, he hated violence but why did she feel the need to try and make a man of action out of him? It wasn’t like she was in love with him... was it?” she asked herself. She shook her head and continued her work, siesta would be over soon and she needed to prepare for dinner.

H.G. Wells heard Victoria’s frustration and walked toward the curtains. He raised his hand in order to be polite and knock on the door, until he realized that there wasn’t a door to knock on, and to try and knock on a curtain would be a little stupid.

Wells shook his head and peeped into the kitchen, standing still between the two pieces, one half in the kitchen and one half still in the tavern.

Wells cleared his throat.

Victoria looked up.

“Excuse me, miss, I am terribly sorry to disturb you, but I couldn’t help hearing your discussion earlier. Are you all right?”

Victoria sighed but nodded. “I am fine, thank you, but I will be right there with you, I think I can use someone to talk to right now.”

Wells nodded. “I am always prepared to listen to you, Miss Escalante,” he said before he turned around and took back his place where he was sitting earlier until he heard a scream coming from the kitchen.

“Let go of me! Señor Wells, help me, please help me!”

Wells sprinted to the kitchen, where he saw two men wearing some sort of a kerchief on the lower half of their faces, but not the third man who had placed himself against the wall that was attached to the curtains. The only thing that he would remember was a blow to his head before everything went black.

“Put him behind the bar and let’s get out of here now. I don’t know how long our girl will be unconscious, and we can’t fail or he will have our hides. He was clear on that one — we need to succeed where our friend, don Carano, failed.”

They had knocked her unconscious with one of her own pans. It would be easier that way. They placed Victoria over one of the saddles, ready to take her to the same abandoned farmhouse where they held Lois Lane.

Clark was racing towards the pueblo, his mind consumed with what he had heard. He feared for his new friend from another time, H.G. Wells, plus he couldn’t go home without him. Frankly, he didn’t want to leave without Wells; he was the reason he had a chance to save his Lois.

“Lois...” His mind traveled to some beautiful moments, the moment she first came barging in the office when he was at the Planet for his interview, to the moment of their first kiss.

He shook his head. “Focus, Clark, focus,” he said to himself when the pueblo came into view.

Earlier in Zorro’s cave...

Felipe was sweeping the floor in the cave when he was startled by another set of hooves. He looked up in confusion because Toronado was still inside.

Diego ran into the cave with Esperanza behind him. “Don’t ask me how I know or how Señor Kent knows, but it is time for Zorro. We are both fearing for Victoria’s safety.”

Felipe was used to Diego’s intuition but the fact that there was another man with the same intuition was confusing for the young man. He asked how it was possible and what had happened in his own sign language.

“I don’t know, Felipe, but it is strange,” Diego said while he removed his white shirt and replaced it with Zorro’s black one.

“Here is a man, saying he is from the future, living by my values, and the weird thing is he knows who I am and he said he knew what it felt like to lead a double life...” said Diego while he replaced the light blue pants for Zorro’s black one.

He was used to talking to Felipe while he was dressing, knowing that Felipe heard him while he was saddling Toronado, with a little more difficulty because of Esperanza’s presence in the vicinity of the stallion.

Felipe would be yelling out of frustration right now if he only could.

Stallions... he thought with a sigh.

On less urgent times this would amuse Diego, but not now, not with Victoria’s safety on the line.

“Toronado!” he yelled, “stand still, we don’t have time for your love life right now, Victoria is in danger!”

The black horse breezed thinking, *yeah, you have a love life, the one time I have a chance to have a willing mare, I can’t have some fun!* But he did what Zorro asked of him and stood still to get the saddle on his back.

“Good boy, I will come back with Esperanza when she is in heat and when we have more time.”

This promise calmed the stallion down. Zorro jumped on Toronado’s saddle, leaving Esperanza in his stable.

No need for I-fell-off-Esperanza excuse this time. Zorro thought with amusement before he said his usual goodbye to Felipe and left the cave.

Back at the present time...

The pueblo was starting to wake up from siesta time when Clark arrived at the tavern. He ran up to the tavern porch after tying his horse down on one of the poles in front.

He tried to open the front doors, but they were still locked. This time he knew for sure that something had happened.

He banged his hand on the door in frustration, trying to use as little of his power as he could, before he ran behind the tavern, hoping that the kitchen door would be open.

The door was wide open, and he carefully stepped inside. “Victoria, are you here?” he yelled. He tried again while he walked toward the curtains into the tavern. “Victoria?”

Again all was silent until he heard a groan coming from behind the bar. He looked toward the direction of the sound and saw Wells lying there.

“Herb, what happened over here?”

Wells sat himself up straight with his hand on his head. “Clark, is that you?”

“Yes, it is me. What happened here? Where is Victoria?”

Clark raised his hand when he heard boots walking in the kitchen. He was ready to attack whoever came in here and raised a fist, but stopped when he saw who it was.

In the abandoned farmhouse...

Lois was sleeping against the pole, she still wasn't used to the desert heat. She would marry Clark immediately if she came out of this. She would take nothing for granted, because Clark was the only thing she could think about.

One of the bandits, named Juan, splashed some water in Lois' face. “Wake up, little lady, you have company.” He laughed evilly.

Lois looked towards her right. Lying there was a beautiful young woman with raven-black hair.

This must be Victoria! thought Lois. *Maybe she knows if Clark has arrived yet?*

Lois needed to wait until Victoria was back in the land of the living though. Meanwhile, she heard the bandits talking to someone outside the door. She couldn't see who it was, but she didn't recognize his voice, that way she knew that Tempus had an accomplice. She listened closely to what they were saying.

“Well done, boys, now we need to wait until Zorro comes and saves them with that other idiot. That way I will finally have my revenge on that masked bandit and his girl!” The evil man laughed.

Chapter 8

Clark raised his fists, ready to fight off whoever was creeping in the kitchen, forgetting the fact that he expected Zorro to come here.

Footsteps approached the curtains, then a black glove opened the curtains and a black masked man appeared in the tavern.

Clark snatched him up and placed him against the wall, his fist ready to strike before Zorro could think of reacting. He had an amazing intuition, but even that wasn't good enough to see this coming.

“Easy, Clark, it's me!” said Zorro with a calm voice, lifting his hands in the air.

Clark recognized Diego and placed him back on his feet. “I am sorry, you are Zorro, right?”

Zorro nodded. “Yes, I am Zorro. I must say, you are pretty fast for being such a big fellow.”

You ain't see nothing yet! thought Clark to himself looking at Wells, who was clearly thinking the same thing.

“What happened here? Where is Victoria?” asked Zorro, clearly anxious when he talked about his girlfriend.

Clark turned towards Wells. “Yes, tell us, my friend, what happened here?”

“Help me up, please, and I will tell everything I know!”

Clark reached out and pulled his English friend back on his feet and towards one of Victoria's wooden benches.

“It was after señor De La Vega left...”

Zorro and Clark listened closely to the story, hoping to get some clues on where to start searching. Clark was cursing the fact that he couldn't use his speed in the past, fearing he would change too much and the impact that would have for the future, let alone how the people in this timeline — who were afraid of witches — would react if they knew that he wasn't an Earth human, but a Kryptonian human, an alien. In other words, he didn't want to find out, not with the two women's lives in danger.

“Who is behind all this and is it the same bandit that took your Lois and my Victoria, or are they both different, and if they're different, do they work together?”

Clark sighed. “I think I can answer some of those questions, but I would rather answer them where nobody can hear us, because — and this is going to be the hard part for me — there is a reason why I said earlier that I understand your life better than you might think.”

Zorro nodded before standing up. “Get your horses and meet me behind the tavern, we will start looking from there,” Zorro said in a kind of leader tone.

Clark and Wells nodded before running to the front doors. Clark unlocked them, then they made their way to the two beautiful dark brown Andalusian horses they had borrowed from the De La Vega ranch.

They jumped into their saddles and rode straight behind the tavern where Zorro was waiting on a beautiful black stallion.

“Gentlemen, this here is one of my loyal partners, this is Toronado. There is a reason I lent you those particular horses, they are the few lucky horses that can keep up with my good old boy here,” Zorro said while he stroked the stallion's strong, black neck.

The other men smiled but they were both anxious to start looking for the missing women.

In the abandoned farm...

Lois was staring at nothing in particular, not thinking much, it was the impact of the hot desert sun warming up the farm she had been imprisoned for a few days now. She snapped out of her thoughts when she heard a soft moan next to her.

Victoria was regaining consciousness, moaning softly. “Where am I? What happened?”

“You must be Victoria?” said a female voice on Victoria's left side. She turned her attention to the direction of the sound.

“Yes, I am. I don't want to be rude, but I've never seen you before, who are you?” she asked Lois.

Victoria had a thought of who she could be, but she wasn't sure. *This could be the woman señor Kent was looking for.*

“My name is Lois Lane. A man named Tempus took me from my home and brought me here.” Lois was careful with what she would reveal to Victoria — for the moment anyway, she didn't know if she would believe her if she told her everything.

“You are the woman señor Kent and his friend are looking for? But why would Tempus want to capture me?” Victoria sensed that there were things Lois wasn't revealing.

Lois sighed. Clark was looking for her together with his friend, that must be Mr. Wells. “That friend, is he a little short with a strange hat and a strange accent?”

“Yes, that is him,” Victoria answered honestly.

Lois' hope was rising again. Clark was looking for her. Clark, not Superman. It would be soon now that she could jump into those loving arms, kiss those loving lips.

“That reminds me, I think we were both taken by different bandits but my guess is that they work together. I never recognized the voice. All I know is that he said that he would have his revenge on you and Zorro, and that he would get that other idiot, meaning Clark.”

“Taking revenge on Zorro, that is nothing new. And on me, well, I am a woman with an opinion, not everyone is happy with that. Plus, I think most people know that they can lure Zorro out by using me as bait.”

Lois laughed. She knew what it felt like being used as bait to lure out the hero, she was used as bait for Superman more times than she was able to count.

Outside the abandoned farm...

Tempus and his partner in crime, Palomares, were sitting around the campfire just out of sight from the farm where they were holding Lois and Victoria.

Palomares' men, Juan, Rico, and Francesco were holding guard around the farm.

“So you want me to believe, that you, Tempus, come from the future and want to destroy an alien named Clark Kent, aka ‘Superman,’ ” Palomares said, quoting with his fingers when he said Superman, “to rule the world in the future by destroying their loved ones?”

“That is the short version, yes!” said Tempus with a serious face.

Palomares started to laugh. “What do you take me for? An idiot?” Palomares grew more serious again. “Say I believe you, why help me with revenge on my enemy?”

It was Tempus’ turn to laugh now. “Oh, but I am not only helping you, my dear friend. I also need to destroy him to rule the Earth completely and you were willing to help me without any questions.”

Palomares shrugged. “If it takes me going along with you in this crazy story to get rid of the man who humiliated me twice, well, so be it, but don’t even think about playing with me or it will be your last time. I want Zorro’s head and nothing less.”

“Don’t worry, you will get your revenge,” laughed Tempus darkly before it got silent between the two.

Clark stopped his horse and started to scan the sand behind, trying to pick out the right tracks. He jumped off his horse and examined a pair of human tracks.

“These tracks are from a man that is carrying a great weight, possibly over his shoulder. See, that one track is deeper than the other. I believe that this track is the one we need to follow, he is carrying Victoria!”

Zorro couldn’t believe his eyes, he knew he was good tracker, but this was insane. He jumped off Toronado’s back and looked at the tracks Clark had pointed out. *I am curious about this man’s story*, he thought while he mounted Toronado again.

Clark looked towards the tracks and followed them until they ended. Where hoof tracks started, he pointed a little further.

“That is where he mounted his horse, so those are the tracks we need to follow,” he said while he walked back to the horse that Wells was holding. He jumped on the horse’s back and turned it in the right direction.

“How did you know all of this?” Zorro wanted to know.

Clark sighed. “I think it is time I revealed my secret to you, but first of all, please... all I have to tell you is going to sound unbelievable, but trust me everything is true. This secret has to stay between us, even at the moment that I will leave this time,” Clark pleaded.

Chapter 9

“I am wearing a mask, pretending to be someone less than I am when I am not wearing it. I fear for the moment Victoria will find out the real man behind the mask, so I think that your secret is safe with me,” Zorro answered while they followed the tracks of the bandits.

Clark sighed. “Here goes nothing! I am from the future, Tempus is a bandit from an even further future who wants to rule the world, but he needs to destroy two enemies: you and Superman.”

“Superman?” asked Zorro in confusion, still following the tracks of the bandits.

Clark took a deep breath. “Yes, Superman. You see, Zorro, I am not only from another timeline, but I am also not from this planet.”

Zorro pulled Toronado’s reins to stop the horse immediately and looked at Clark in confusion.

Clark and Wells did the same.

“You are serious?” asked Zorro, the scientist in him awake now.

“Yes, I am serious about this. I am a human from the planet Krypton. My birth parents brought me to Earth, the only other place we are able to live, just before my home planet exploded. Some good people by the name of Kent brought me into their home and raised me like a normal human like you and Herbert over here. The only thing that is different is that I have certain abilities that separate me from the rest. The yellow sun enables me

to have those abilities — that is why I have an alter ego named Superman, the Man of Steel. That way I can lead a normal life, because unlike you, I am only haunted by the ones I capture, I help the police, something like the lancers here.”

“How do you move, do you have a Toronado too, and what are those abilities?” asked Zorro, still confused but the scientist in him wanting to know everything.

Clark smiled. “Here goes the hard part. No, I have no partner like you have in Toronado, I move through the air!”

Zorro shook his head. “Did I hear you right? Do you move through the air? How?”

“It is better that I show you!” Clark said, before giving the reins of his horse to Wells. He dismounted the horse and looked around. “This part must stay a secret.”

Zorro nodded, still in disbelief, but what he saw next really shocked him. Clark started to float in the air, before coming back down and remounting his horse.

“Did I just see that right? You can fly?” Zorro was still shocked.

“Yes, but don’t be afraid of me, I am not some evil being that wants to rule the world. I live by your values, that is the only thing I can’t reveal, that is your story. I hope we can still work together to find Lois and Victoria?” Clark prayed he would say yes.

“Amigo, there is nothing I am afraid of, I can feel that I can trust you and yes I will help you, we need to work together though,” Zorro answered something triggered him to wanting to learn more about this human from another planet.

“I noticed that day that you are a very strong man, is that one of the abilities, too?” Zorro asked while they restarted following the tracks.

“Nothing will hurt me as long as there is no Kryptonite near me. Bullets will bounce right off my chest, and I am able to lift even the largest rock above my head. But enough about that, I want you to know that I admire you and that you are an example to live by. You are a human without any special power, a man who can be killed by a bullet, and that doesn’t stop you from riding out and putting your life on the line for those who need your help. I am honored doing this rescue with you. Thank you, Zorro.”

Zorro smiled. This was the best compliment he had ever gotten, coming from someone who knew what it was like leading a double life. “This Lois you are trying to find, is she from another planet too?” Zorro asked curiously.

Clark shook his head. “No, she is from Earth, but she is the love of my life, and like your Victoria, she doesn’t know anything about me being Superman. I will tell her in time, but not here not now.”

Zorro nodded in understanding. He knew this all too well.

They kept following the tracks in silence, afraid to give themselves away.

Abandoned farm...

“Trust me, I know how it feels being the bait for a hero.”

This caught Victoria’s attention. “You are not from here, are you?”

Lois smiled, but thought about how much of the truth she could tell Victoria without losing the little trust she had managed to earn.

“I am from America. In our city, there is a man that helps the people who need help. He is a good friend of mine and bandits know that I am the only thing they can connect our hero with.”

“I think that is what connects us, our enemy has help from your enemy and they are working together to try and destroy them, but it is Clark who is coming to save me so their plan will not work. I hope he could reach your local hero Zorro in order to work together, we will be out of here in no time!”

Victoria nodded before something green and glowing caught her attention, making her breathe harder out of fear. Victoria was a

strong woman, but this was something she never saw before.

“Lois, am I right?”

Lois nodded and heard the fear in Victoria’s voice. “Yes, Lois is my name. What is wrong?”

Victoria turned her face towards the glowing green stones behind them. “What... what are they?”

Lois smiled. “Those rocks are called Kryptonite. They are the only thing that can hurt the hero from my town.”

“What about bullets or a knife?” asked Victoria, who became curious now.

Lois shook her head. “Bullets bounce off his chest, he is so strong that he can lift the biggest rock you can imagine.”

“How is that possible? I know Zorro is a strong man, but even he can’t do that.” Victoria grew more curious by the minute, forgetting her fear for the unknown.

“Superman — nobody knows who he really is — is a human being from another planet with another sun. They have a red sun on their planet. He was brought here to Earth for safety, we don’t know how long he has been on Earth. Due to our yellow sun, he is almost unbeatable — we call him the Man of Steel. Only this small thing can turn his ability to bounce bullets off his chest off, and that way he can be killed. That is the only thing we know and that he helps people and values life, just like Zorro.”

“From another planet? You are not afraid of him?” Victoria wanted to know.

Lois shook her head again. “No, he would never hurt somebody on purpose.”

Victoria sighed. “I hope they will be here soon, I want to go home.”

Lois sighed. “Me too.”

Chapter 10

The abandoned farm...

Tempus and Palomares chose that moment to walk inside the farm.

“Did you hear that, Tempus, the girls want to go home.”

“Yes, poor girls, they are waiting for their heroes to arrive,” laughed Tempus loudly.

“Wait until Zorro finds you, you will wish you were never born,” threatened Victoria.

“Oh, I am so scared. Well, I hope he comes here, that way you will see how I will destroy not only your beloved, but also your best friend and leave you with nothing but pain,” laughed Tempus again.

“What has her best friend to do with it?” Palomares whispered towards Tempus.

“Leave Diego out of this, he has done nothing wrong!” yelled Victoria.

Lois could only look down. She knew what Tempus was saying and what he was about to reveal, and there was nothing she could do about it or was there?

“Tempus, don’t you think you have tampered with history enough?” Lois spoke, trying to let Tempus see reason, but that was the same as a cat learning how to bark.

Victoria’s looks went from the villains to Lois and back, there was something they knew that she didn’t.

“Oh no, my dear Lois, this time I will succeed,” Tempus said, his voice serious.

“Would somebody please tell me what is going on here and tell me why he wants to go not only after Zorro but after Diego too, Diego had done nothing wrong!” yelled Victoria, tears running from her eyes now.

“Oh, this is rich.” Tempus laughed. “You mean you’re that stupid?” Tempus shook his head but even Palomares was confused now.

“Think about the period that Zorro arrived for the very first time. Who came home earlier? By day I am a caballero who’s not

able to defend myself, but at night I become a master with the sword wearing a mask and riding a wild stallion.” Tempus laughed.

Palomares started laughing. “That clumsy De La Vega, the famous fox of the night. You are crazier than I thought.”

“You are the one that is stupid, Diego wouldn’t do that to me and besides, how the heck would you know?” Victoria’s temper was rising now.

“Oh, didn’t your new friend tell you? We are from the future, my dear, we all know your story there and I am about to change that story.”

Victoria looked towards Lois who just smiled and whispered a silent sorry towards her.

“Don’t worry, Victoria, Clark is with him, not Superman, so his plan isn’t going to work.” Lois tried to convince Victoria to hold on to that hope.

“You got to be kidding me.” Tempus laughed. “You are even more stupid than Victoria,” Tempus mocked. “Her hero had a brilliant disguise if I do say so, but my dear, you are fooled by some glasses! Think about that, my dear dear Lois.”

Lois shook her head, that couldn’t be, but the more she thought about it, the more it made sense.

“So there is an alien with superpowers on his way over here and you’re not afraid?”

Tempus shook his head. “You see, my dear Palomares, there is one thing deadly for this man and that are these green rocks. This will be easy. Zorro is on his own, Superman is useless.”

“Is what he tells me true, Lois?” Victoria asked in confusion.

Lois could only sigh in defeat before nodding. “It is all true, I am afraid.”

“I saw Clark bend a pistol with ease!” Victoria whispered to Lois.

Lois was afraid that for once, Tempus was right. She was stupid. She was an investigation journalist for crying out loud, and she never saw this. That meant that there was no way they could warn Clark about the Kryptonite. Zorro was indeed alone in his rescue as long as these dreadful rocks were here. She placed her head against the pole. For the first time since she was captured, she lost hope. She knew Zorro was smart and a master with the sword, but was smart enough to win from these two alone? She did something she never did, she started to pray for a happy end to this adventure.

Clark kept using his gizmo eye ability to follow the tracks until an abandoned farm came into sight. He placed his finger in front of his lips, asking for quiet while he x-rayed the abandoned farm. He saw the girls and the two villains, but failed to see the Kryptonite that Tempus had placed at Lois’ other side.

“They are keeping the girls inside the farm. I see two bad guys, one of them being the one I am after, Tempus. Maybe we could dismount here and sneak up on foot?”

The other men nodded in agreement.

“I am going to keep Toronado close, but he knows how to be silent, he could be useful.”

Clark agreed. He knew the legend of the famous horse by heart; coming from a farm, he was more than interested in the legends with animals and the legend of Toronado being the king of all horses

and being the loyal partner, besides Felipe that is, had been one of his all-time favorites.

Zorro hadn’t called himself the fox because it was a beautiful animal. Like the animal, he was smart and cunning in order to survive, so he explained his plan.

What they didn’t know was that someone had been following them and had informed the Alcalde of where he could find the masked man known as Zorro. Desoto was very happy with this information and raced in the direction that was pointed out to him.

After racing for half an hour, he noticed horses tied towards a tree. “Those are the horses the strangers were riding earlier.”

Desoto jumped out of the saddle and started creeping up on Zorro, Clark, and Wells. He was going to wait for the perfect timing to capture Zorro, but he needed a plan to get rid of the other two first.

Needless to say, Desoto was afraid of Clark. He had heard the tales of the man that bent a pistol like it was nothing special. He had heard it not from Mendoza but from a very loyal lancer, who only spoke the truth and nothing more. You could call him Desoto’s spy, giving information for a few pesos more every month and a promise of promotion once he captured Zorro.

Desoto crept up a little closer in order to hear what it was that they were telling each other. You never knew, he might hear something he could use afterward. He watched the three men carefully, noticing that Zorro and the strong stranger were sneaking to the front of that abandoned — or so Desoto thought — farm. He looked at the other stranger, the one with the strange hat creeping to the back of the farm hoping for a window of some sorts, to sneak inside and release the women while the other two took care of Palomares and Tempus.

Zorro stood on one end of the door and Clark on the other, Toronado hiding nearby behind a large rock. Clark opened the door, but dropped to his knees, groaning in pain the moment he felt the radiation of the little green rock on Lois’ side.

“Clark!” yelled Lois, but it was no use, the Kryptonite had already started to weaken him.

Zorro looked at Clark in confusion, but had no time to think about it when Palomares charged, keeping him away from his new friend.

Tempus used this moment to take the green stone and place it next to a groaning Clark, who was trying his best to stop the blackness that could follow. The stone could knock him out, he knew that from the first time he came in contact with the green poison.

“Clark, Clark, try to stay with me!” Lois yelled through her tears. The man she loved was dying and she had no way of helping him.

Zorro was holding his own against Palomares. He had beaten him twice, and he would beat him again if it weren’t for the helpers he had been hiding. Palomares was leading him to a place he knew one of them was hiding, Palomares going backward and giving Zorro the impression that he was winning, the moment he was close enough he started to turn around until Zorro’s back was pointing towards Juan, one of Palomares’ loyal helpers.

Juan pointed a gun at Zorro’s back. Zorro looked around to where he knew Toronado would be and winked to the horses who stayed hidden. For now, Zorro hoped that they hadn’t discovered Wells, but his hope was shattered when he saw another of Palomares’ helpers with a gun pointed at Wells.

“Come on, gentlemen, we have an appointment with—” He couldn’t finish his sentence when he heard his third man yell, “Boss, I have another one over here,” as he came down with his gun pointed against Desoto.

“Well, look who we have here. You must be the Alcalde, tie them up, then we will decide what we will do with them in the morning.”

Tempus had already tied a now-unconscious Clark to a pole when the rest walked in, all with their hands in the air. He tied Zorro at the other side of the pole that he had tied Victoria to. Wells was tied to the same pole as Lois, and last but not least, he tied the Alcalde to the last free pole in the farm. Clark was just tied up, with the green poison next to him.

“Come on, Tempus, nobody knows they are here. We will come back in the morning and decide their fate.” Palomares laughed, placing a hand on Tempus’ shoulder.

They turned around and walked away, leaving their prisoners

under the watch of Juan and his men. To be sure Zorro would behave, Palomares had ordered to keep Victoria at gunpoint, with orders to shoot to kill if anyone tried anything.

Chapter 11

Tempus and Palomares walked away, with plans to come back the next morning. What they didn’t know was that Toronado, who had seen everything, had run off. They hadn’t seen him disappear behind the mountains.

Toronado ran as fast as the wind he was named after. He was going to need the help of Zorro’s other partner, Felipe. He couldn’t do it without him.

Felipe was sweeping the floor in the cave when Toronado came running inside, stopping at the end of his stable. He was neighing, behaving very restlessly, he reared a little. Felipe ran toward the stable. He knew this was serious — even that time he had thrown his rider in the ravine by accident he wasn’t this nervous. He was a rather calm stallion when he was in the present of Felipe or Zorro.

Felipe grabbed the second saddlebag they kept near the stable, excellent for emergencies like the one they were in now. He mounted Toronado with a jump. Felipe was good and well in the saddle when Toronado turned around and made his way out of his stable and out of the cave as quickly as he possibly could without hurting Felipe. He was fast but careful because this rider wasn’t used to riding at full speed. The black stallion stopped behind a big rock near the abandoned farm. Felipe stood on Toronado’s back, just like Zorro had done many times before. He watched over the large rock but ducked down immediately when one of the guards came in his direction. Felipe jumped off Toronado’s back and dove between the two large rocks. Toronado wasn’t hiding though, he grabbed the man with his arm and pulled him behind the rock toward the place where Felipe had hidden.

“What the— Aaaaaaagh!” yelled the first guard.

Felipe grabbed a stone near him and smashed it on the guard’s head. The guard was immediately unconscious. Felipe tied him up and gagged him with his own scarf, then dropped him between the rocks.

The second guard had heard him yell but didn’t see the man.

“Juan? Juan, where are you? Juan, answer me!” yelled the second guard, walking in the direction the sound came from.

“Juan, are you he— What the— Aaaaaaagh!”

Again Toronado grabbed the second guard by the arm and pulled him behind the rock with a force he never knew he had. Even Felipe didn’t know Toronado was that strong. The stallion smacked Andreas against the big large rock. He died at the spot.

Felipe looked at Toronado and signed, *did we take all of them?*

Toronado shook his head and drew one line in the desert sand. The stallion was a smart stallion, but he was the King of horses after all.

Felipe signed again, *one more?*

Toronado nodded his head. Felipe jumped back in the saddle, placing his feet on the stallion’s broad back. This way he could see over the rock without someone seeing him.

I think the last one is still inside! Felipe signed. Felipe was still full of wonder, that although Toronado was a horse, he still understood the deaf-mute servant’s signs.

Desoto and Zorro looked at one another. This was ironic, both captured by the same bandits. They both had heard the sounds outside. This could only mean one thing. Toronado was still outside, Zorro knew, and it gave him that little bit of hope he needed. Felipe needed to be quick, though, not for him but he wasn’t sure how long Clark could deal with whatever that little rock was. His breathing was becoming more and more shallow and he still hadn’t regained consciousness.

Desoto and Zorro weren't the only ones who had heard the yells though.

Felipe was creeping up at the front side of the house, with Toronado on his heels. The third guard walked outside, not expecting Felipe to be this close. Toronado had already turned around. The plan was simple.

The door opened and Felipe waited until the guard walked out. Felipe grabbed him, without letting anyone know he was there. He pushed the guard towards Toronado, who had turned around and was pointing his backside towards Felipe now. Toronado aimed and bucked the guard right on top of the roof of the farm. One of his hooves landed on his head. That blow was fatal.

Everybody looked up the moment the guard hit the roof.

"What was that?" Desoto asked, being really afraid for the first time in his life.

"Not what, but more like, who was that?" answered Zorro with a smile. Toronado used that moment to walk inside.

"You got to be kidding me! Is there something that devilish beast you call a horse can't do?" Desoto said in his typical sarcastic way.

Toronado looked Desoto's way, ears flat against his neck.

"If you want to survive this, you'd better keep that sort of talk for yourself next time. Toronado understands us and has a mind of his own when it comes to insults." Zorro smiled while Toronado was biting through Zorro's ropes. Zorro rubbed his left wrist, the place where the ropes had been.

"Zorro, the Kryptonite!" Lois yelled, her eyes red from all the crying.

"Can it hurt my horse?" Zorro asked, not wanting to risk Toronado for this.

Lois shook her head. "No, it can't hurt him, but Clark is history otherwise."

Zorro took the glowing green rock and turned towards his horse. "Drop this in the ravine we use to escape, that must be far enough from here."

Toronado took the stone and made his way out of the farm, starting to run the very moment all his hooves hit the desert sand. Toronado didn't stop until he was at the ravine. He stood on the edge and threw the green poison down. The Kryptonite shattered into tiny little pieces. The stallion turned back around and made his way back to the farm.

Zorro took the knife that once belonged to his fighting master and cut through Victoria's ropes, but instead of jumping into his arms, she turned around to free the woman she became friends with so quickly. Lois, in turn, made her way to the man that held her heart and was regaining consciousness by now.

"Clark, are you all right?" She sniffed through her tears.

"I will be fine soon, I hope, thanks to Zorro and his fantastic stallion." Clark groaned while Lois did his best to free Clark. She didn't know how long it would take to regain his power.

Desoto was the last one to be freed by Zorro. "All right, Alcalde, I know you want to capture me, but what you think in taking revenge first? A truce until tomorrow?"

Desoto thought about it. Normally he would flat out refuse and tell them that he didn't make deals with outlaws, but the thought of revenge for this humiliation was far more interesting.

"All right, Zorro, you win but after tomorrow, I will see you hang," said Desoto evilly.

Zorro sighed. Same old cat and mouse game over and over again, but hey, it was his life. The only thing he did was shake his head though.

"I will be back tomorrow before dawn, with my lancers."

Desoto turned around and walked outside, but turned back. "Oh, and I am taking one of the horses of the De La Vega ranch to get there, your horse is so powerful that it will be no problem to get everyone home." Desoto laughed before he left the others.

Victoria didn't speak until Desoto was gone. She was angry,

but not that angry as to sign Zorro's death sentence by speaking in front of Desoto. She turned around and watched him, her eyes full of anger.

"What is wrong, Querida?" asked Zorro without knowing that Tempus had revealed his identity.

"What is wrong? Well, I will tell you what is wrong, you lied to me for four years and now you ask What is wrong? Did you like playing with me, Diego!" Tears ran over her cheeks, anger filling her

voice.

Zorro sighed, not wanting to fight her, but he wanted to stop the lying. Victoria saw this as a sign that she was right. "Damn you, Diego, I could have been married by now!"

"Querida, please—" but Diego was stopped by a fierce señorita.

"Don't Querida me, Zorro! You of all people how worried I was about, well... you."

"It was for your own safety," Zorro tried to explain.

"My safety, you of all people know that I am used as bait more than once!" Victoria yelled.

"What do you want me to say, that I am sorry for making mistakes, for being human?" Zorro's temper was rising now.

Clark and Lois stood aside watching everything explode. Lois was angry too but she knew she needed to keep her calm, them fighting now wouldn't help them. They both looked up when they heard something behind the farm, and Zorro also turned around. Victoria swallowed her next sentence; she was angry, but Zorro was still an outlaw with a price on his head. They kept silent until Zorro saw who it was. He should have known.

"It is all right, Felipe, they know!" yelled Zorro in the direction of the farm. Zorro was glad that Desoto never saw him. The young boy stepped from behind the farm. This was the last straw for Victoria.

"Do you mean that he knows?" she asked with a still rising temper.

Zorro shook his head. "It is thanks to Felipe that I always knew what was going on."

"He isn't deaf, is he?" Victoria wanted to know.

"No, the best spy for Zorro," laughed Zorro but looking at Victoria, his laugh disappeared.

"This is the last straw, Zorro! How will I be able to trust you again after this!" She groaned and stormed off, Lois on her heels.

Chapter 12

Victoria ended her run after a few minutes, much of her anger already vanished.

Lois placed a hand on her shoulder. "You sure can run, Victoria," Lois said.

"I'm sorry, Lois, but he made me so mad. How can I trust him after this?" Victoria asked with a sigh.

"I know what you mean, Victoria." She looked around before she continued, "Clark and I are together and he never told me. But being imprisoned and seeing him almost dying made me think that there is more about this, that there must be a reason why they never told us."

"A reason? Lois, he knows I love him, what more could he want?" Victoria asked with a rising temper.

"Think about it, Victoria, would your safety be the only reason? What if he was just afraid to tell you?" Lois asked, knowing how she had been drooling over Superman in the beginning.

"What do you mean? My safety is only an excuse! I have been used as bait more than I am happy to think about. I would be in less danger as Diego's wife!" This was the first time Victoria admitted that she felt more for Diego than their friendship.

"I understand that. I want to ask you this, though, and I want an honest answer. I know how I have treated Clark in the years

before I really admitted my feelings. I was drooling over Superman, he could do no wrong, and Clark was my friend but ...” She just couldn’t go on.

Victoria stared into the open, thinking about what Lois told her. Was she the same? She thought about how she had been treating Zorro and how she had been treating Diego.

“What was I thinking, he was just afraid to tell me. He was afraid that I wouldn’t believe him due to the mask he wears as Diego? What have I done?” Tears started to roll over her face. “What if I chased him away for good? How can he still love me?” Victoria sighed through her tears.

Lois placed her hands on Victoria’s shoulders and looked her straight into her eyes. “I’m sure he will understand your reaction, I have a feeling Clark will take care of that.”

Victoria hugged Lois. “Thank you, Lois, you made me see reason. I hope he will forgive me.”

“He will forgive you, Victoria. You are the best couple I have ever seen. Trust me. I can’t reveal too much, but hey, they will be looking for us soon. Leave it to Clark and Wells!”

Victoria sighed. “You are probably right. Zorro will come after me.”

A few minutes earlier

Zorro looked in the direction where Victoria had disappeared. “You know, Clark, I was afraid that this would happen — the moment she knew about my identity, she was going to reject me.”

Clark walked until he stood next to Zorro.

“It is not for sure that she has rejected you. Yes, she is mad, but Lois will make her see reason. You know I am quite amazed I didn’t receive the same, knowing Lois as I do. She is a lot like Victoria. A beautiful woman with a fierce temper, but a heart of gold.”

Zorro turned towards Clark. “She is the best thing that ever happened to me. Losing her will be the end of Zorro. She is the reason I can hold on, knowing that she will wait for me at the end.”

“I hear you. I was afraid to, not for her rejection, but something just stopped me from telling her. I tried so many times, but I am glad she knows now,” Clark said.

“We will have to see when she comes back,” sighed Zorro.

They both looked around when they heard hoofbeats behind them. It was Toronado. They had sent him home with Felipe.

Zorro walked towards his loyal stallion. “I could never have done this without his help,” Zorro said while stroking Toronado’s broad neck.

“I wanted to ask you about that.” Clark moved towards the stallion with caution. “Your legend isn’t the only one known in the future. Your horse has a legend of his own. The legend goes that he is the first known king of horses. Is that true?”

Zorro looked in Toronado’s direction, the horse gave his master a slight nod.

“Yes, it is true. He got the title from his father and this title will be for his firstborn foal, I suppose the one I saved when I first found him.”

“These are the legends that give me the power to keep fighting all that is bad in the world. I am glad I am able to thank you for that,” Clark said, humbled.

“I still convinced that it is impossible for Victoria to love me.” Zorro sighed. Victoria was the only thing on his mind right now. “Where is she, by the way? It will be dark soon. Let’s go and search for them.”

“My boy, nothing is impossible,” Wells said before leading Zorro in the direction of where the girls had disappeared.

“Wells is right, Zorro. Let’s go and bring you two back together,” Clark said, placing his hand on Zorro’s other shoulder.

Zorro looked over his shoulder at his stallion. “Come on, Toronado, let’s go and find the girls before dark.”

The stallion nodded in response before following his master and his two new friends.

Earlier that evening...

Desoto rode into the pueblo. They were hiding something and he was sure he would know it before their truce ended. He wasn’t going to attack Zorro physically but leave him alone and miss a chance to learn something about his arch-enemy. It just looked like he was leaving Zorro and his friends alone, but even then he wouldn’t make deal with outlaws.

“Mendozaaa! Where are you?” he yelled, jumping of the De La Vega’s horse.

Mendoza came running out of the tavern. Mendoza was loyal to his commanding officer. Mendoza stopped in front of Desoto.

“Si, mi Alcalde,” Mendoza yelled, greeting his officer.

“Mendoza, get my horse and take a horse for you and the corporal, we are going on a little camping trip.” Desoto smiled.

“A little camping trip, mi Alcalde?” asked Mendoza, confused.

“Yes, Mendoza, you heard me. I know where Zorro is right now and we are going to spy on them, hoping to find out who he really is.” Desoto laughed. “Now stop asking questions and get the horses,” Desoto yelled. They had no time to lose now.

“I will get you now, Zorro, and nobody is going to stop me.” Desoto laughed evilly in the direction of where he came from.

Desoto, Mendoza and the corporal arrived soon at the place where Zorro and his friends were waiting for the morning to come and to end the battle with Tempus and Palomares once and for all. Mendoza and the corporal were making camp while Desoto was spying on his arch-enemy.

Zorro, Clark and the women didn’t notice the extra guests who were looking at them from behind the rocks. They had just placed some wood in a circle of stones. *Damn, where are those matches*, thought Zorro. They weren’t in his saddle bag.

“Why search for matches when I am around?” Clark quipped.

Zorro looked confused in Clark’s direction. Clark looked at the wood and his eyes started to glow a bright red color before lasers appeared out of those eyes, lighting the wood in a matter of seconds. Zorro looked at Clark. “You are full of surprises. You are handy to have around, though,” Zorro quipped.

What they didn’t know is that someone else had seen those laser eyes.

Desoto was shocked. “Zorro is hiding the devil himself.” Desoto was so shocked that he shook his head in disbelief. “We are dealing with the devil! I need to take care of that and soon. Better keep an eye on them from a distance.” Desoto was still shocked. He could deal with Zorro, but could he deal with the devil?

Chapter 13

For all the people that are curious about the legend of Toronado, King of horses, read “Toronado’s Thoughts.” It can be found on my profile or else you can send me a PM for the website link. It gives a unique view of life as Zorro’s horse. Greetings, LadyTpower

On with the story...

Desoto crawled back from his place behind the rock to their camp. He took a note and a feather out of his saddlebag and his specially-designed, paid-with-the-taxpayers-money-of-course inkwell, designed in a way that he could take it with him on a trip. He wrote his plan on a piece of paper and rolled it up.

“Corporal, take this paper and follow the instructions. It is the best plan ever to not only get rid of the evil himself, but also get rid of Zorro.” Desoto laughed towards his corporal.

“The evil, mi Alcalde?” Mendoza asked, confused.

“Yes, Mendoza, I will explain to you in a minute. Please, Corporal, this needs to be set up the moment we walk in with the prisoners.”

“Si, mi Alcalde!” The corporal saluted before he jumped on

his horse's back.

"Now follow me, Mendoza, I am going to show you how the devil looks like," Desoto said, before crawling back towards his hiding place with Mendoza close on his heels.

"Look, Mendoza, do you see that strange man, without the hat?" Desoto said, pointing in the direction of Clark.

Mendoza nodded his head. "Si, mi Alcalde."

"That is the devil himself. I saw him make fire with his eyes." Desoto was still shocked.

Mendoza shook his head. "No, no, mi Alcalde, that is no devil, that is Señor Kent from the Americas."

"No, Mendoza, he is the devil in disguise. I saw him make a fire just with his eyes," Desoto stated.

"Fire with his eyes, mi Alcalde?" Mendoza asked, confused.

"Yes, Mendoza, now do you see the fire going out down there?"

Mendoza nodded. "Si, mi Alcalde."

"Now, if we are lucky we will see the devil at work!" Desoto was sure of what he had seen.

The feeling outside was getting colder, the fire was almost going out when Clark opened his eyes. He was immune to the cold, but not the rest. He looked around him. On the other side of the fire was Zorro, using Toronado's saddle as a pillow. His right arm over Victoria's body, who was using Zorro's broad chest as a hard pillow, her hand resting in the crook of his neck. Beside Victoria was H.G. Wells, with his hat over his eyes, using his vest around a rock to sleep. At last, his eyes fell on the beautiful head resting on his own chest, Lois sleeping soundly. He caressed her before he aimed his laser eyes on the fire to fuel it again.

"Did you see that, Mendoza? Did you see that? I knew it, I was right!" Desoto almost yelled to Mendoza, shaking Mendoza's shoulders.

"I saw it, but I can't believe it, mi Alcalde. What are we going to do now? And what about Zorro? He never did something bad?"

"Mendoza, Zorro is an outlaw, a bandit, and now an accomplice of the devil himself."

"But Zorro fights for justice. It can't be right!" Mendoza was not convinced even if he needed to fight Zorro, he knew deep inside that Zorro wasn't evil.

"Don't you see, Mendoza, they are possessed by him, doing only what he wants them to do. We need to do our duty, Sergeant, and illuminate them. Too bad for the others, but even the ones who are in his possession need to die." Desoto watched in front of him and an evil grin appeared on his face.

"But then you need to kill Señorita Victoria!" Mendoza stated with a shock. He was too fond of the señorita, or her food anyway. Victoria was the best cook in the pueblo.

"I am sorry, Mendoza, but we can't let her live. She belongs to the devil now," Desoto said with feigned pity for Mendoza. To Desoto, she was harboring a known criminal and she needed to be punished. He hated everything related to Zorro and this was just the perfect opportunity to rouse the people against Zorro.

Lois had turned around and was no longer resting her head on Clark's broad chest. She was his anchor to the ground, because not long after that he started to float a few inches off the ground.

Too bad that there were people keeping a very close eye on him.

"Mendoza!" Desoto shook the shoulder of his sleeping sergeant. "Mendoza!" He shook again.

Mendoza woke up from a dream about Señorita Escalante's enchiladas. "What is wrong, mi Alcalde?" the sergeant asked, still a little sleepy.

"Look down there, What do you see?" asked a shocked Desoto, with fear in his eyes for the very first time in his life. He was used to dealing with bandits, outlaws, heck even murderers, but not supernatural, not with demons or the devil himself.

"I see señor Kent flying." He shook his head again in disbelief

at what he just said. "I see señor Kent flying? Madre de Dios, we are going to die tonight. I am not ready to die yet!" whined Mendoza.

"Shut up, Sergeant. We are not going to die! They will die tomorrow. Try to play along with me in the morning, we must not let them suspect that we know something?"

"Si, mi Alcalde." Mendoza nodded in fear. He didn't know who he was more afraid of, the Alcalde or Zorro and the devil. He still couldn't believe it, Zorro — a man he considered a friend — would be evil now.

"Now, Sergeant, we go to sleep, so that we will be fit in the morning. Ready to act and finally bring down the Zorro era." Desoto laughed evilly. This time he was going to win and go back to his beloved Madrid a hero. The morning would come soon enough.

Zorro and Victoria were the first to wake up.

"Good morning, Querida." He kissed Victoria lovingly on the lips. She couldn't help but kiss him back surely, now that she knew who was behind the mask. She needed to act like she didn't know, because you never knew who would be listening besides the ones that already knew.

"Good morning, Zorro, this was one of the best nights of my life. I am sorry about how I reacted yesterday, but I was just too shocked by the news." Victoria placed her arms around Zorro's neck and looked in his deep blue eyes. "Maybe I was just angry at myself that I just never saw it, thinking of myself as a stupid woman who didn't deserve you."

Zorro caressed Victoria's cheek. "You are the smartest woman I know. You are even more than I deserve, Querida. I am just glad you didn't reject me as I feared and we will talk after everything is over. I love you Victoria," he said, still caressing her cheek.

Victoria smiled. "And I love you, Zorro, with all my heart, never doubt that. I love you and not the mask."

Victoria leaned in and Zorro willingly followed. They kissed until someone cleared his throat.

"I'm sorry, so sorry, but it is time, Mr. Zorro. They will be here any moment now. Miss Lane and Mr. Kent are already up and observing the farm."

"Thank you for not being mad at me for lying to you, Lois," Clark stated, looking into those brown eyes.

"Seeing you dying there, Clark, made me think about what is important. I could have lost you back there if Toronado hadn't saved us." Lois sighed, still in disbelief at the fact that they were saved by a horse.

"I wanted to tell you for so long, I just didn't know how to start. I am an alien, Lois. That isn't something I could explain easily. Speaking of Toronado, did you know that the legend is true?" He never stopped looking in those beautiful eyes.

Lois laughed. "I should have known that this wasn't your usual horse. Oh Clark, I love you so much and I am going to make you never doubt my love again. I just wanted you to know in case something goes wrong tomorrow."

"Everything is going to be all right, honey, trust me." Clark hugged Lois and caressed her hair.

"Everything will be all right," he whispered again.

Chapter 14

"They will be here any minute now," Zorro said from behind Clark and Lois, with Victoria's arms around his waist, and H.G. Wells at his other side.

"Enjoy your freedom, Zorro, because this will be the last fight you will win. After our truce, I will succeed in capturing you. You have an appointment with the hangman's noose," Desoto said, standing there with only a nervous sergeant at his side.

"A good morning to you too, Alcalde! I would stop dreaming if I were you, you will never catch me," Zorro quipped.

"Oh, I am not dreaming this time, Zorro, you are going down

the moment our truce ends,” Desoto responded.

“Lois, Victoria, go back to the camp and wait there for us,” Clark ordered.

“No way, I am not going back to camp. I am staying here, Tempus took me in the first place. I want my revenge and don’t tell me to listen to you, because we both know I will stay here anyway, so why bother?” Lois said to Clark, with her arms crossed over her chest.

Zorro looked with the same eyes at Victoria, but got his response even before he could say something.

“Don’t even think about telling me to leave, Zorro, I want to see Palomares go down for good.” She took the same position as Lois they stood next to each other, both women determined to stay there.

Zorro sighed. “All right, but stay here when everything begins.”

Victoria looked at him determination still in her eyes. She didn’t need to respond on that one; he could see what she was thinking.

“Why do I bother telling you this, you will do what you want anyway.” Zorro sighed again, shaking his head in disbelief.

“Those are the women who need to be eliminated.” Everyone turned around and looked straight in the face of Tempus, with Palomares behind him.

“I should have known that those three guards weren’t enough and that you would survive, Clark,” Tempus said, a bit agitated towards Palomares who didn’t respond.

“I am going to be quick about this, give yourself up now. You are outnumbered,” Clark ordered.

Tempus laughed. “We don’t take orders from an alien.” That little comment didn’t throw him off balance though. “Call it a strong suggestion, then!” he bounced back.

Tempus only laughed. “Palomares, show our guest how we do this.” Palomares draw his saber and charged at Clark, but Zorro jumped in front of him with his saber.

“I have warned you for the last time, Palomares. Show up again and give me the need, and I will kill you. You are really close to giving me that need, Palomares,” he said, while charging him towards the place where Toronado was standing.

“You are not going to kill me, because you have principles.”

Toronado took the moment to take his arm in a strong bite and reared up.

“You are right, I have principles, but my horse hasn’t!” quipped Zorro before he saw his horse come down with Palomares yelling in pain. Toronado had a strong grip. He smashed Palomares against a large rock near him. The body landed at the foot of the rock, but the smash made an avalanche of rocks, burying the body as a sort of last resting place. All it needed was a wooden cross.

Toronado was stepping towards Tempus now. Tempus himself was stepping backward. “Call that devilish animal back before I shoot him,” Tempus warned.

Zorro didn’t respond well to warnings. “If Toronado dies, you will join him.”

Tempus laughed. “You think that I am afraid of your saber?”

Clark sighed, he had had enough of this. He stepped towards Tempus. The only way Tempus could go was the other way, back towards Toronado until he bumped into the horse. He turned around and jumped in the saddle, hoping he could hold on long enough to get this beast moving forwards.

He didn’t know that he not only faced the Man of Steel but also the horse with an iron willpower.

Toronado reared up. Tempus grabbed his neck. The stallion bucked as high as he could, making Tempus smash his head into Toronado’s hindquarters. Toronado reared again and smashed Tempus against the ground with another high buck. Toronado’s backside was almost straight in the air. Tempus couldn’t hold on

that time.

“Aimed and launched,” Clark quipped while facing Tempus, who was face down in the hot desert sand. He grabbed Tempus by the shoulder and lifted him up. “I will leave him in your capable hands, Sergeant.” The sergeant was still nervous, placing Tempus on the back of the horse he had taken to come here.

Desoto took the command back. “Señor Wells, you can ride behind the prisoner. Señor Zorro, I assume you will take señorita Victoria to the pueblo. Señor Kent, you and señorita Lois can take the other horse Palomares came with.”

Everyone did what was told and soon they were on their way back to the pueblo, Tempus gagged because Desoto was agitated by his babbling about Clark being an alien and then about the poet of the Pueblo being Zorro. He was sure that Clark was the devil, but fortunately for Zorro, he never believed that the coward of the pueblo was the outlaw Zorro.

The ride to the pueblo was filled with silence. Zorro sighed and pulled Victoria closer to him. His intuition was nagging at him, something he blamed on walking next to the Alcalde and not being chased by him. He didn’t trust the Alcalde completely but he would cross that bridge when he came to it.

Clark was also lost in thought holding Lois close to him. He wasn’t an experienced rider, let alone riding with someone in front of him. He admired the people who lived here, who didn’t know what a car was, let alone how easy it was to take something like that for granted. He even wasn’t going to take his flying trips for granted. That was the power he missed using in the past. He was going to take Lois on a flying trip to Paris when all of this was over and they were back in Metropolis and in the year 1993.

The biggest surprise, though, was when they arrived in the pueblo.

“Dear Zorro, our truce is officially over now! Grab him!” Desoto yelled.

Lancer came out of hiding, and surrounded Zorro and Victoria, separating him from Clark, Lois and H.G Wells. Toronado was agitated but didn’t dare rear, with not only Zorro but also Victoria on his back. Zorro was outsmarted this time.

“Take them to their cells, they die at dawn!” ordered Desoto to his lancers.

The people were filling the plaza one by one, Don Alejandro in front of them.

“Alcalde, what the hell have these good people done to deserve this? That price on Zorro’s head is a disgrace and you know it,” he yelled towards the Alcalde.

“I wasn’t going to say this because it would only panic the people, but Mr. Kent is really the devil in person!” Desoto said, sure of himself.

Mendoza nodded. “He is right, people. I saw him make fire with his eyes.”

The people were backing away from Clark, everyone except don Alejandro. “What about Zorro and señorita Escalante? They aren’t evil.”

“Dear people, Zorro is not only an outlaw but he is possessed by the devil himself. They need to die, I am sorry. Anything else and you will hang with them in the morning.”

“People, I am not the devil. I don’t know where he gets this but I am not the devil. You need to believe me!” Clark yelled. He hated that he couldn’t use his powers now, because if he did it would make them only more suspicious of him being the devil himself.

Chapter 15

Zorr3o was the next one to respond, he was tired and a little edgy. “Dear people of Los Angeles, did I ever hurt anyone? Did I ever tell something that wasn’t the truth?”

Most people started to shake their heads, but Zorro continued his speech. “Please believe me when I say that the Alcalde is lying

to you again! Señor Kent is not the devil. Would he have saved señorita Escalante if he was evil? Would he help me to catch this criminal?" More people started to shake their head now.

"Zorro is right!" someone yelled in the back. "He has never lied to us and why would we believe that a man who helped a lot in the past few days would be evil?"

"People of Los Angeles, if I was who this man says I am, would I be standing here? Think about it, wouldn't I use my so-called powers to free myself and my friends? Think about it, people."

Desoto was in a rage now. For once he thought he was telling the truth and nobody believed him. "Dismount or die, Zorro!"

Toronado reacted, agitated. He wanted to leave with his master and Victoria, but the lancer had surrounded them. Zorro knew he was defeated, but the only way to escape from prison would be if he found a way for Toronado to escape. Zorro jumped off Toronado's back, leaving his sword on Toronado's saddle. The moment Zorro jumped off his horse the lancers grabbed him, forgetting to hold Toronado.

The stallion saw his chance and whirled around and galloped full speed away from the pueblo. Before anyone could react, the horse was gone with Victoria still in the saddle. Victoria couldn't do more than hold on real tight and let the horse run, Toronado would know where to bring her to safety.

Zorro was dragged by the lancer straight over the plaza, the lancers with a still-fighting Lois, Clark, and Wells not far behind them. The gagged-up Tempus was dragged to prison as the last one.

Zorro looked through the bars of his cell at the plaza outside, where people had started to fight. Zorro was a hero in their eyes and they would never let him die, but what could they do. The sun was burning in the afternoon now, the dust whirled up from under the feet of the protesting people. Clark stood with his back against the wall, his arms crossed over his chest.

"I am sorry I brought you into this mess!" Clark sighed. he could break them out easily but now wasn't the time; it would prove that he was different from anyone else. It would prove to the people that he indeed was the devil.

"Don't worry, Clark, we will get out of this. If I know Felipe like I do, I know he will be here as soon as possible." Zorro laughed.

"I am glad you find it funny, Zorro," sighed Lois, a little agitated. She was tired, she was dirty from the dust and the desert sand, and she was sure that her clothes would be ruined by the time they left the era.

"I am sorry, señorita Lois, but this isn't the first time for me." With those words a shadow was crawling towards the prison, tying a rope around the bars. A little arrow flew through the bars and broke apart on Clark's chest. Zorro took the paper and opened it. It held only one word: "whistle."

Zorro knew what to do know, he whistled and the bars were pulled out of the prison.

"As I told you, señorita, I had no reason to panic. Now go!" Zorro whispered. They were free, but the fight wasn't over. Desoto went too far this time. He needed to leave or die, something his principles had stopped him from before now, but if he knew his stallion there would be a surprise for the Alcalde.

Lois crawled out of the dirty cell, with Clark behind her, followed by Wells, Zorro being the last on to leave. He untied the cell bars and placed it back before they left for the plaza. He knew his stallion extremely well, there in the plaza in front of them stood thirty horses, all with their ears in their strong necks. Zorro wanted to mount Toronado but he stopped him from doing so. This time it wasn't Toronado, Zorro's fast horse; no, this time it was the king in front of them. The horses opened like a red sea and Toronado walked through them, the sea of horses closing behind him.

People started to arrive back on the plaza. When they heard a famous neighing, they saw Zorro and his strange friends behind the horses. People started cheering, they were cheering so loud that Desoto walked outside to see what all the commotion was about. He clearly hadn't heard Zorro's whistle.

"What the—" He stopped mid-sentence when he saw all the horses.

"Nooo!" he yelled, defeated, when he saw Zorro and his friends. Toronado was tired of all of this, he bumped Desoto backward, he struggled to stay on his feet, but that wouldn't take long. Toronado grabbed the man by his arm before he could grab a weapon. He smashed him into the group of horses who came with him, who just bucked him back in Toronado's direction. Toronado smacked him one more time, one hoof hitting Desoto's head. Everybody heard a loud crack. Desoto was gone before anyone could react. This was what happened when the king was in a rage.

Desoto's era was gone and it was time for Clark and Lois to go back to their time — they been long enough in the past.

"Zorro, do you have a moment?" Clark asked while he walked to the pueblo gates.

Zorro nodded and followed his friends until they were out of sight.

"It is time for us to go now. We have been in the past long enough. Please give Victoria our sweetest regard. We will never forget any of you," Lois said. Wells pushed a button and their machine appeared. The machine had only two seats, so Lois was placed in Clark's lap. With a poof, they were gone.

A few weeks later ...

Lois and Clark were sleeping in bed when they were spooked by a knock on their door.

"So much for sleeping in today," Clark groaned sleepily. He x-rayed the door and saw Mr. Wells.

"Oh boy!" Clark groaned while he slipped out of bed.

"What, oh boy?" Lois asked sleepily. They weren't married, but being in the past and the events that had happened there had made them think about their lives and how easily you can lose even if you are Superman.

"Put on some clothes, Lois, it is Hebert Wells," Clark said while he walked towards the front door in some sleeping shorts.

Lois fell back to bed with a disappointed groan, her hands next to her head, staring at the ceiling.

"Mr. Wells, what trouble are we in now?" Clark asked, almost agitated.

Lois and Clark had been making love until early in the morning, so they had only a few hours of sleep.

"No problems this time, I assure you, Mr. Kent. Can I come in to explain?" the old British man said.

Clark stepped aside as a gesture to let the older man pass. Lois was already dressed in a tee and sweatpants. Clark took place next to her.

"I was in 1820 yesterday to pick up Tempus, and I got these presents for you from don Diego and his fiancée, Victoria. There is a card on top." Wells smiled.

Clark opened the envelope clearly from the past. It was an old-looking card, written in a beautiful handwriting.

Dear Lois and Clark,

Please accept these clothes as a gift, hoping we could expect you on our marriage on December 10.

Sincerely,

Don Diego De La Vega and Victoria Escalante

"December the 10th, but that is today?" Clark said while he opened the gifts, a beautiful dark blue suit with light blue embroidery and a dark blue sash in the style of 1820.

Lois opened her gift and in that gift was a beautiful light blue dress in the style of 1820.

"I will give some time to dress up and we will go. We have a wedding to attend," Wells responded to the confused faces of Lois

and Clark.

A few hours later they were back in 1820, both dressed in the clothes they received as a present. They were both glad that they got the opportunity to witness the marriage between the fox of the night and his one true love. They had combined their powers and saved both their utopias.

THE END