

## The Mark of Zorro

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“Sissy has a mummy leg,” chanted little brother till he was routed from the room by our irate mother.

That muggy summer, my afflicted leg encased in a cocoon of taut bandage sealed me into hot, heavy bondage. I devised a method to scoot on my small backside to the long French windows, where Mamma drew aside Irish lace curtains, opening the outside world to my view.

Did I miss my peers? Not really. I missed my other world — the movies. The movie house was a scant lily patch away, from which speaker sounds tantalized my ears. In those wonder-drug-less days, the triple infection of my knee was subject to hot soaks daily.

Concern distorted the doctor’s long face when he whispered ominously in corners with Mamma. I became so forlornly withdrawn that she disobeyed his orders and carried me to the back exit doors, where the theater manager, smiling gold-toothedly, aided her.

In cavernous delight, I drifted, one with Zorro, my all-time favorite. The excitement gave me a serious setback. I caught the doctor’s grave “may never walk again” and read correctly Mamma’s stricken eyes.

Swallowing my heart, I resolved to become a medical miracle, secretly practicing slow mobility. The day I mastered three steep flights of stairs to join Mamma (cleaning in the attic), she fainted dead away.