FLAGS OF CALIFORNIA

California was explored and colonized by Franciscan monks and Spanish soldiers. Each military expedition flew a different flag—usually the personal banner of the nobleman commanding the expedition.

But later on, the Spanish Army adopted this colorful banner. It flew over Spanish troops during the many revolts and the Revolutionary War that led to Mexican Independence.

While the Spaniards were busy in California, the Russians attempted to colonize Alaska. The Russian-American Trading Company was formed and soon it was sending expeditions further and further south until they reached California. A Russian trading post was established at Fort Ross just north of San Francisco. It flew this flag showing the double eagle of the royal family of Russia.

In 1822, the Mexicans were finally successful in their revolt against Spain. California became part of the Mexican Republic. This flag was raised above every fort and town hall. The golden eagle of Mexico is eating a snake which symbolizes evil.

On June 14, 1846, the American settlers in California revolted against the Mexican Government. The revolt was quickly crushed by the Mexican Army. The flag of the short-lived republic is now the California state flag. It shows a grizzly bear—symbol of strength and independence.

Then came the war between Mexico and the United States. It ended with the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. California became American territory and was admitted to the Union in 1850. It was the 31st state to enter and the American flag that Californians took special pride in hoisting was the flag of July 4th, 1851—it carried California's star—the 31st.
The Hand of Zorro

For the first time, the highwaymen attack with the cunning of an organized band! From hilltop to hilltop, messages flash, directing robbers...

No main route is safe, no coach spared and no traveler’s purse secure...

Even the tax collector’s coach, bearing the royal arms of California’s ruler, his Spanish Majesty, is not immune.

Two days later, as Diego Vegas strolls into the neighboring Casa Conchola...

But Don Vincente, you cannot have paid your taxes! There is no record of it! Your own tax agent drove off with my money in his coach two days ago!
AH, SEÑOR. YOU ARE LIKE THE OTHERS! NOW ALL CLAIM THEIR TAX MONEY WAS ON THE ROBBED COACH!

THE NEW TAX COLLECTOR, HIS EXCELLENCY, THE MARQUIS ESTABAN DE RIGOS, HAS DECREED NO MONEY WILL BE CREDITED UNTIL IT REACHES HIM, DON VINCENTE!

YOU MAY TELL HIS EXCELLENCY THAT I WILL NOT PAY AGAIN!

BEAUTIFULLY PERFORMED, VINCENTE! YOU ALMOST CONvinced me your money was on that robbed stage!

IT IS EASY FOR YOU TO MAKE JOKE OF THIS, DIEGO! YOU WILl NOT PAY DOUBLE TAXES!

PANCHITA... DELIGHTED TO SEE YOU! I TAXED MY WANING STRENGTH TO RIDE OVER WITH THESE CANDIES FOR YOU!

BUT NATURALLY, YOU ATE THEM ALL!

WHAT A FascINATING IDEA! THE GIFT BEARER CONSUMES HIS GIFTS AND Maybe THE TAX COLLECTOR ROBS HIS OWN TAXES!

LATER, AT THE CASA OF THE VEGAS...

TERROR REIGNS ON THE ROADS, BERNARDO, BUT WHO HAS RAISED A HAND AGAINST IT? NOT MY SON, DIEGO!

DON ALEJANDRO, YOU SPEAK PERHAPS TOO QUICKLY! THE SWORD OF ZORRO IS NOT HERE!
AND IN THE HILLS...

AND IF THE SWORD IS GONE...

...THEN YOUR SON, DON DIEGO, MAY BE RIDING IN SEARCH OF THE HIGHWAYMEN... AS EL ZORRO!

ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH, WE USED TO HEAR OF A COACH BEING STOPPED BY A HIGHWAYMAN... BUT NOW THIS IS DIFFERENT!! NO COACH ESCAPES, AND THE ROBBER'S SEEM TO CONTROL ALL THE ROADS!

BUT HOW DO THEY KNOW WHERE TO STRIKE AND A LANTERN? SOMEONE'S SIGNALING FROM THAT HILL!

AND IF IT'S A CALL TO OTHERS... THE MORE THE MERRIER!

MINUTES LATER...

SO IT WAS A SUMMONS TO PILLAGE! WELL, THEY RECKONED WITH ONE SWORD LESS!
THE COACH CAME FROM THE MINES! THERE'S GOLD ON IT, AMIGOS!

AND THERE IS ALSO ZORRO ON IT!

COME, SEÑOR! THE JOURNEY IS LONG—BUT WHAT BETTER WAY TO PASS THE TEDIOUS HOURS THAN WITH A FEINT—AND THEN A PASS!

M—MY ARM!

NOW ZORRO FALLS!
YOU WERE TOO EAGER, AMIGO! BUT I SHALL REWARD YOU FOR YOUR TROUBLE!

THEY LEAVE US, DRIVER, AND WITHOUT THEIR COMPANY, IT WILL BE TOO DULL A TRIP TO TAKE! FORGIVE ME IF I DEPART!

OUCH!

I WILL COME BACK! SO I SHALL HASTA LA VISTA!

WHERE IS HIS EXCELLENCY? HE IS FENCING! YOU CANNOT DISTURB HIM!

WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY WILL DISTURB HIM!

LATER, AT A CASTLE DEEP IN THE HILLS OF ALTA CALIFORNIA.

BUT IF THEY COME BACK...

MARQUIS DE RIGOS! WE MUST SPEAK TO YOU AT ONCE!

PRAY SPEAK! YOU COULD HARDLY EXPECT THAT TWO DUELLING ADVERSARIES COULD COMPLETELY OCCUPY ME!
THE COACH FROM THE MINE GOT THROUGH!

What? How could it? I thought I had organized you highwaymen too well for a gold coach to slip through your fingers!

EL ZORRO STOPPED US!
EL ZORRO? ONE MAN?

Ah, excellency, you have come fresh from Spain—you do not know this Zorro! There is no swordsman like him!

No? I suppose he could disarm an opponent better?

That I do not know, excellency, but he has prevented the robbery!

Then we shall make certain we prevent him from interfering again!

Before I came here, you were small, futile groups of dissolute beggars—taking your pickings from the highway when some fool dropped you a crumb! But I knew, if organized, you could rule this part of Alta California and this is only the beginning!

Zorro! He will not endanger my plans! I will—

Mercy, excellency! I—I am not El Zorro!
The next day... Here, SÍ! And I do not know which is worse — the highwaymen or Panchita!

My plan will continue! You signal men command the hills! Messages will be flung from hill to hill to me here, when a prize is seen! I will direct the attack from the castle. In a few days, perhaps, I will have another tax coach of mine to rob! Till then, let us see what our travelers provide!

You won't go! Panchita, I have explained the importance of delivering the letter at once! Think — if the roads are not made safe, our wedding guests and presents may never arrive!

I do not think our wedding day will ever arrive, Don Diego! And since you have more urgent things to do than see me — good, today!

Later... As Don Diego, I would surely attract the purse-snatcher and could not defend myself! But as Zorro... well, I shall soon see if I will need my sword!

And nearby... There is a wave of the torch across the valley! A lone rider comes!

He shall have company, eh, amigos?
Zorro! The leader has promised a purse of gold for his death! After him!!

If you are seeking gold, amigos, you will find only lead and steel!

Aiee!! My shoulder!

Bang!

Seconds later... Where is he? There is his horse ahead! Forward!

If they see me swing up here, I shall really be out on a limb!
As they say, all good things come from heaven.

I am leaving, amigos, but do not trouble yourselves to rise!

Zorro has gotten through—now Diego can safely deliver the letter!

Later, at the governor's palace...

Don Diego, the conditions outlined here by your father are serious! I shall send a detachment of cavalry to the territory at once!

Certainly! I do not know how you got through! But a man like—I'll—well, you are no swordsman! You will be given protection!
CAPTAIN, MAY I SUGGEST YOU SEND SOME RIDERS AHEAD TO Scout! WE ARE ENTERING THE LADRONES' TERRITORY!

MY DEAR SENOR VEGAS, I CAN EASILY UNDERSTAND WHY ONE OF YOUR--YOUR PEACEFUL NATURE MIGHT BE FEARFUL. BUT DO NOT WORRY! NO ONE DARES ATTACK HIS MAJESTY'S CAVALRY!

SIGNAL THE CASTLE! THE CAVALRY COMES ALONG THE CAMINO DE NORO!

THREE FLAShes...TWO FLAShes... PASS THE WORD ON!

Soon...

EXCELLENcy, A MESSAGE HAS JUST ARRIVED! ROYAL CAVALRY ADVANCE ALONG THE CAMINO DE NORO!

THE CAMINO DE NORO? LET US LOOK AT THIS MAP!

ANY ANSWER, EXCELLENcy? SI! WHEN THE CAVALRY REACHES THE NARROW PASS BELOW MONTE DIABLO OUR MEN WILL START AN AVALANCHE!
Later, by Monte Diablo...

They are all in the pass! His excellency plans well! They will advance no further! Start the rocks!!

Rumble! Captain! Avalanche!
THIS WAY!
YOU'LL NEVER MAKE THE CREVASSE!

UP!!

SAFE... BUT THE TROOPS ARE TRAPPED!

AND WHEN THE DEADLY AVALANCHE ENDS...

THE CAVALRY RETREATS!
BUT THE POOR DEVILS...
WHAT ELSE COULD THEY DO?

THE ROCKS CAME FROM THE HILLS ABOVE! IF I RIDE UP THERE, I MIGHT FIND THE HIGHWAYMEN — AND EL ZORRO WILL FOLLOW THEM TO THEIR LAIR!
Quickly changing clothes, El Zorro rides into the hills...

The signal light! Now it should be easy to find them!

His excellency signals to bring the discarded weapons to the castle!

They head south with the cavalry's arms! Where the loot goes...there the leader must be!

Cautiously keeping well behind, Zorro follows the highwaymen...

I was right! I did hear someone following!

El Zorro!
TAKE HIM AND GOLD WILL FILL OUR POCKETS!

FOUR TO ONE... BUT MAYBE THIS WILL REDUCE THE ODDS!

I'M HIT!

ONE LESS... BUT NO TIME TO RELOAD!

ZING!

THEY MUST EACH HAVE A HALF-DOZEN CAPTURED PISTOLS—AND ALL LOADED! I HAVE BUT ONE CHANCE TO ESCAPE!
DOWN TO THE RIVER! IF EL ZORRO SURVIVED THAT DIVE, HE WILL NOT ESCAPE US AGAIN!

SPLASH!

...THERE IS NO SIGN OF ZORRO!

IF HE DOES NOT COME TO THE SURFACE IN A MINUTE, IT IS CERTAIN HE HAS DROWNED!

LOOK! HIS HAT! THE FORCE OF LANDING IN THE RIVER MUST HAVE TORN IT OFF!

BUT HIS BODY... THE VULTURES WILL TELL US WHEN IT COMES TO THE SURFACE!
MY TASTE IN HATS IS EXCELLENT! THERE IS JUST ENOUGH AIR TO LET ME BREATHE!

Later, Don Diego tells his father of the cavalry's rout.

Now they have driven back the cavalry. No one is safe here! If only we knew who leads them!

WHOEVER HE IS, HE COMMANDS THE HIGHWAYMEN BY SIGNAL FIRES AND HIS HEADQUARTERS IS TO THE SOUTH—BUT THAT IS ALL I COULD LEARN!

BUT ONE THING BECOMES CLEARER! THE HIGHWAYMEN'S LEADER IS AFTER THE CONTROL OF OUR ROADS!

Elsewhere...

Splendid! The cavalry will not come trotting into our lands again too soon! We have established what I have sought—control of the roads! And in this thinly settled area, who controls the roads...rules!
BUENAS DIAS, SEÑORS! WHAT FINE CATTLE! BUT THEY ARE WORTHLESS IF THEY DO NOT REACH MARKET!

AND TO REACH MARKET, THEY MUST USE THIS ROAD! SEÑORS, THIS ROAD NEEDS REPAIRS--A SMALL GOLD COIN FOR EACH HEAD OF CATTLE WILL TAKE CARE OF THE ROAD TAX!

NOT EVEN THE NIGHT PROTECTS THE TRAVELERS.

STOP, AMIGO!

FROM THE ARMS ON THE COACH, WE HAVE A NOBLEMAN!

AND LATER, AT THE CASTLE...

HERE IS A PRIZE, EXCELLENCY! SHE WAS OUT RIDING NEAR CASA CONCHOLA! WE BLINDFOLDED HER AND BROUGHT HER HERE!
FORGIVE ME IF I DO NOT DOFF MY HAT, SEÑORITA, BUT IT IS BETTER IF I REMAIN UNKNOWN! CASA CONCHOLA CAN AFFORD TO PAY DEARLY FOR YOUR SAFE RETURN!

NO! THEY WILL NOT GIVE A CENTAVO TO YOU! I WILL NOT ASK THEM!

SO MUCH THE BETTER! THE LONGER THEY DELAY PAYING, THE BETTER ACQUAINTED WE CAN BECOME!

WH-WHAT? WHERE IS QUILL AND INK?

THIS WAY, SEÑORITA! BUT THEY SHALL PAY A GOOD PRICE FOR DEPRIVING ME OF YOUR COMPANY!

LATER... DIEGO, THE HIGHWAYMEN HAVE CAPTURED PANCHITA! LOOK AT THE PRICE THEY ARE DEMANDING!

I SEE... BUT YOU WILL NOT PAY IT!

BUT PANCHITA-- I SHALL RESCUE HER!

EASILY SAID, DON DIEGO! BUT YOU FORGET ONE THING-- WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE SHE IS HELD PRISONER!

TRUE, VINCENTE, BUT I HAVE A WAY TO MAKE THE HIGHWAYMEN LEAD ME TO HER!
Soon... Bernardo, are the clothes packed?

Sí, Don Diego! The guise of El Zorro is carefully concealed in the luggage, as you suggested!

Good! Have our best coach prepared at once! You will drive me as we planned!

Minutes later...

Senors, I swear by the gold ornamented hilt of my Castilian sword, that I shall bring back Panchita!

Viva, Don Diego!

Viva!!

Forward, Bernardo! And woe to the ladrones!

Good fortune!

Woe to Don Diego! You cannot stop highwaymen with a silk handkerchief and a dress sword!
THE PEOPLE THINK THE LAMB IS BEING LED TO THE SLAUGHTER! IF THEY ONLY KNEW DON DIEGO IS REALLY ZORRO! THIS PLAN IS A DARING ONE... HE RISKS ALL!

SOMETIME LATER...

NOW THERE IS NOTHING TO DO EXCEPT DRIVE UP AND DOWN THESE HILLS AND WAIT FOR THE INEVITABLE!

A NOBLEMAN'S COACH!

SIGNAL THE RIDERS!

INTO YOUR SADDLES, AMIGOS! THERE IS GAME AFOOT!

THE HUNTING HAS BEEN POOR. WHO IS THE FOOL WHO TEMPTS FATE BY RIDING THE ROADS ALONE?

ONLY A DRIVER RIDES WITH HIM--NO GUARD!

HE IS ASKING TO BE TAKEN! LET US NOT DENY HIM HIS WISH!
AT LAST THEY COME! STOP THE COACH, BERNARDO!

BACK! KEEP BACK OR YOU SHALL FEEL THE POINT OF MY SWORD!

AMIGOS, HE JOKES! THAT DRESS SWORD HAS NO POINT!

ON GUARD!

LEAVE THIS FOPPISH CLOWN TO ME! HE LOOKS READY TO DANCE, NOT DUEL!

MY SWORD!

BLINDFOLD AND TIE HIM AND THE DRIVER! WE'LL TAKE THEM TO THE CASTLE!

HERE! USE MY HANDBERCHIEF! I WILL NOT HAVE SOME DIRTY RAG TOUCHING MY FACE!

SÍ, SEÑOR! THE SILK HANDBERCHIEF WILL DO. TURN THE COACH FOR THE CASTLE!
Later...
The coach is slowing up, Don Diego!

Yes, Bernardo! We are coming to a castle! I can see perfectly—as I knew I could, if they blindfolded me with this fine silk handkerchief!

Now I recognize the highwaymen's headquarters—it is the old castle, Angelo!

You can untie them and remove the blindfolds! You will be taken to our leader!

Bernardo, carry my luggage inside! It appears we are to be detained here a while—I need a fresh change of clothes!

Excellency, the nobleman whose carriage bears the arms of Vegas has come to join us!

Ah, by your mask I take it we shall have a masquerade this evening! I hope I can improvise a proper costume!

No! This mask is to keep you from learning who I am! Suffice it to say, at present, I am your jailer!
I WAS OUT DRIVING FOR PLEASURE WHEN YOUR RETAINERS CAME! YOU HAVE GREATLY UPSET MY SCHEDULE!

BE CAREFUL I DO NOT CUT MORE THAN YOUR SCHEDULE TO RIBBONS! SIT DOWN!

I THINK I CAN FIND A MORE COMFORTABLE CHAIR THAN--

SIT!

NOW TAKE THE QUILL! I HOPE IT HAS A GOOD POINT! I SHALL NEVER FORGIVE YOU IF IT SPLATTERS INK ON MY CUFFS!

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO SPLATTER YOUR BLOOD ON OUR DUNGEON FLOOR, WRITE YOUR FAMILY FOR YOUR RANSOM!

MY SECRETARY USUALLY HANDLES MY CORRESPONDENCE -- BUT IF YOU INSIST!

SOON... IT TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH!

I NEVER HAVE HAD THE EXPERIENCE OF WRITING A RANSOM NOTE BEFORE! BUT WHILE I'M HERE, I INSIST YOU TREAT ME CORRECTLY!

I SHALL REQUIRE MY LUGGAGE AND SERVANT WITH ME IN MY ROOM!

VERY WELL! DUMP HIS LUGGAGE, SERVANT AND HIM INTO A CELL!
I expect the best accommodation! Perhaps a view—

You'll be lucky if you do not have a view of a rat's hole!

IN CODE, BERNARDO! THAT'S WHAT TOOK THE ME SO LONG! THE NOTE—FIRST LETTER OF EVERY SECOND WORD WILL TELL MY FATHER WHERE TO SEND THE CAVALRY!

PANCHITA!! DIEGO!! YOU, TOO! BUT DO YOU KNOW IF VINCENTE RECEIVED MY LETTER? WILL HE SEND THE MONEY SOON?

NO, PANCHITA! I ADVISED HIM AGAINST IT! I PROMISED HIM I WOULD RESCUE YOU! AND A FINE JOB YOU HAVE MADE OF IT!

THIS CELL SEEMS TO BE BY ITSELF! AT LEAST WE SHALL HAVE PRIVACY! UNTIL YOUR RANSOM IS PAID, YOU WILL HAVE ALL THE PRIVACY YOU COULD WANT!
Early the next morning...

By now, my father should have received the letter and sent for help, Bernardo! The time has come for Zorro to act!

You played your part superbly, Don Diego! They never even looked inside your luggage!

And if they did, they would have only found a lot of odd clothes and never have suspected that in the lining of this cape, there was...

...the sword of Zorro!

Si, but we are still locked in this cell!

Not for long! Call the guard!

Guard! Guard!

Now to slide this cape under the bars...

...there! Just be sure, Bernardo, you maneuver the guard onto the cape!
GUARD! WHAT IS ALL THE SHOUTING ABOUT?

MY MASTER ALWAYS BREAKFASTS LIGHTLY WHEN HE AWAKENS! LISTEN CAREFULLY, WHILE I GIVE YOU HIS ORDER!

TO START WITH, HE INSISTS ON FRUIT! BUT IT MUST BE FRESH, AND...

CRACK!

HEY!!

I WILL TIE AND GAG THE GUARD AND HIDE HIM! TAKE HIS SWORD AND WAIT FOR ME HERE!

WELL DONE, BERNARDO! HERE ARE THE KEYS!

CAREFUL, ZORRO... THE CASTLE HAS MANY DEFENDERS!
Minutes later...

Zorro!

Quiet, Panchita! The other prisoners sleep!

Come!

But how will we get out of the castle unseen?

Up these tower steps!

From the tower, we should be able to see the whole castle and plan our escape!

Z-Zorro-- Keep back!
Hurry with that message! His excellency must learn at once the cavalry has entered caliente pass!

Zorro, if they stop the cavalry—

They won't—if their leader does not receive the message!

OWW!

Thud!

Francisco! What happened? Francisco—Francisco!

It sounded like someone falling! If one of the men on watch is drunk, he will pay dearly!

And in the room just below the tower stairs...
AND ON THE TOWER... WHAT WAS IT THAT EL ZORRO!
CURIOSITY DID TO THE CAT?

OH, YES! IT KILLED THE CAT!

MY SWORD! I'M DISARMED! BUT YOU SHALL BE MORE FORTUNATE!

NOW, NOT A WORD, NOR A MOVE--OR MY BLADE STRIKES HOME!

ZORRO! HERE!!

YES, SEÑOR! AND AS LONG AS ZORRO IS HERE, NO ONE CAN SIGNAL YOUR MEN!
EXCELLENCY, A MESSAGE CAME—CALIENTE PASS! THEN THEY WILL BE HERE IN LESS THAN HALF AN HOUR UNLESS OUR MEN RECEIVE THE IMMEDIATE ORDER TO ATTACK!

LET HIM TRY TO REACH THE SIGNAL LIGHT AND HE WILL FEEL THE LENGTH OF MY BLADE IN HIS BODY!

MAKE FOR THE LANTERN! I WILL KEEP THIS BRAGGART BUSY!

A BEAT AND A LUNGE! YOU DUEL WELL!

TOO WELL—AS YOU WILL LEARN TOO LATE!

I WAS BANISHED FROM SPAIN BECAUSE MY SWORD SPILLED TOO MUCH NOBLE BLOOD! THEY GAVE ME A DULL POSITION HERE! BUT SPILLING YOUR BLOOD WILL MAKE MY EXILE BEARABLE!

MEANWHILE, THE FIRST GUARD HAS RECOVERED AND EDGES BEHIND ZORRO...
AND NOW, SEÑOR, PRAY EXCUSE MY ABSENCE, BUT I SHALL RETURN TO YOU!

FOR TEN MINUTES, TWO BLADES FLASH IN THE MORNING SUN, AS ZORRO AND THE MARQUIS DE RIBOS PARRY AND LUNGE IN AN EVENLY MATCHED DUEL TO THE DEATH, AS SUDDENLY...

LET THEM TEND TO THE HIGHWAYMEN! THEIR LEADER SHALL BE MY PRIZE!
And as de Rios makes good his escape from the tower, the cavalry attack...

Force the front gate and the castle is ours!

And on the ramparts of the castle... he is making for the back gate! He will get out before the cavalry can stop him! And if he does, I have only his word that Panchita will be unharmed! But that's not enough!
ZORRO!

DOWN, PANCHITA!

I HAVE RETURNED TO FINISH OUR DUEL, SEÑOR!

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER FOR YOU NEVER TO HAVE BEGUN IT!

YOU WEARY ME... I THINK IT'S TIME TO...
...END THIS! AND NOW, SEÑOR...

...SO YOU WILL NOT FORGET OUR MEETING--THE MARK OF ZORRO!

AIEE!

HERE IS THEIR LEADER! THE MARQUIS DE RIGOS...THE NEW TAX COLLECTOR!

HE SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME JEALOUS OF HIS MAJESTY'S EMPIRE, AND BY USING THESE HIGHWAYMEN AND CONTROLLING THE ROADS, HE HOPE TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN! THERE ARE PRISONERS IN THE DUNGEON! I SHALL FREE THEM!

MINUTES LATER...

WHAT? SEÑOR, DID NOT EL ZORRO FREE YOU? HE RELEASED ALL THE OTHERS!

ZORRO? IS HE THE ONE WHO WAS WEARING THAT RIDICULOUS MASK? WHEN I SAW HIM, I COMMENTED ON HIS POOR TASTE IN CLOTHES--CHOOSING A UNIFORM ALMOST COMPLETELY BLACK! I MUST HAVE OFFENDED THE SENSITIVE FELLOW--HE LEFT US HERE!

DON DIEGO--YOU WOULD NEVER UNDERSTAND EL ZORRO!

THE END