



Alamo Heights

Scott Zesch

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Most people are familiar with the siege of the Alamo in 1836, but many do not realize that there was a second battle in the early twentieth century. In 1903, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas began fighting a large eastern company for the old warehouse that was once the mission convent. With the property secured, infighting between two factions of the DRT, led by Clara Driscoll and Adina de Zavala, divided the organization and endangered the Alamo again. At one point, Adina de Zavala barricaded herself inside for three days to protect the building from demolition.

Scott Zesch's novel, *Alamo Heights*, is a fictional account of the battle to preserve the Texas landmark. More than simply a book on history, it is a story about the people behind the events. Each character has a hidden agenda: Rose Herrera, the character based on de Zavala, wants to protect the Alamo as a symbol of her heritage. To do so, she must fight a corrupt legislator, a powerful eastern syndicate, and her former friends.

Alva Carson Keane, Herrera's partner, protects the Alamo from an eastern hotel company in order to erect a monument to her cattle-baron father. The fight between Keane and Herrera springs from a misunderstanding about the origins of the warehouse, a clash of egos, and mysterious events in their families' past.

The ladies' battle also represents a larger conflict between the Anglo and Hispanic cultures. Zesch's novel addresses the assimilation of Tejanos in a racially divided, increasingly Anglo state. Herrera won't allow Keane and her allies to destroy the Alamo and make a mockery of her culture by building a monument to the cattle barons, a group of people who overran her heritage and her family. Forced into a corner by her powerful enemies, Herrera must make some drastic choices to save the old convent.

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