



Caballero: A Historical Novel

Jovita Gonzalez, Eve Raleigh, José E. Limón (Editor), Maria Eugenia Cotera (Editor), Thomas H. Kreneck (Foreword)

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Jovita Gonzalez and Eve Raleigh's *Caballero: A Historical Novel*, a milestone in Mexican-American and Texas literature written during the 1930s and 1940s, centers on a mid-nineteenth-century Mexican landowner and his family living in the heart of southern Texas during a time of tumultuous change. After covering the American military occupation of South Texas, the story involves the reader in romances between two young lovers from opposing sides during the military conflict of the U.S.-Mexico War. *Caballero*'s young protagonists fall in love but face struggles with race, class, gender and sexual contradictions. An introduction by Jose E. Limon, epilogue by Maria Cotera, and foreword by Thomas H. Kreneck offer a clear picture of the importance of the work to the study of Mexican-American and Texas history and to the feminist critique of culture. This work, long lost in a collection of private papers and unavailable until now, serves as a literary ethnography of South Texas-Mexican folklore customs and traditions.

Caballero: A Historical Novel Details

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Author : Jovita Gonzalez , Eve Raleigh , José E. Limón (Editor) , Maria Eugenia Cotera (Editor) , Thomas H. Kreneck (Foreword)

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From Reader Review Caballero: A Historical Novel for online ebook

D'Argo Agathon says

This was the first book in my Borderlands Feminisms class -- a subject that I have no academic or personal interest in, but nevertheless need for my Master's. Regardless, I read enough of the book to be able to talk intelligently in class, but chances are, I won't be coming back to it after this. Overall, it's a fairly predictable, contrived, over-the-top melodramatic romance with lots of one-dimensional characters and simple conflicts; however, the detail and writing are generally pretty damn good (reminding me even of the level of detail in ASOIAF), and the empowered women protagonists of the story certainly give the book a message worth reading. While I think that this book's historical context -- both in its subject, and in the making/publishing of it (written by women "of color" in the 30's) -- gives this book a definite social/cultural place... it just didn't impress me much. In the end, it's just melodrama.

Ben says

I feel like every Texan needs to read this book. It shows what life was like from a vantage point that we rarely get to see in Texan history: The side of the Mexicans who were living in Texas when the Texans defeated Mexico. History always seems to be slanted towards the winners, now we get to see how hard it was to accept defeat. This gem was hidden away for a long time because it was co-written by a Hispanic woman during a time where neither Hispanics nor women were often published.

Marie says

It's a soap opera with feminist elements. Cool!

Funkdaddyreads says

Read this in college for a Mexican-American Studies class...gender, race, religion, cultural identity, this book has it...and I really identified with its themes because it is set in the area where I was born and raised.

Lo says

kinky! In a covered from neck to ankle kind of way.

Gladys says

When reading this book, you have to be very critical about it. You can't just read it for the story; it won't do much good. Perhaps being aware of the history of the backdrop this book was placed in & always keeping in mind author's intent will make it a much more interesting read.

There was still a lot of things that irked me in this novel. Or maybe it was the overwhelming amount of patriarchy that put me off. It's a good novel, but not a brilliant one.

edit

Okay, after some internal debating. I can't give this book a 3 stars after all, I honestly didn't like it. Again, with the Patriarchy and the romanticism of it all! I just can't. Not really making much a claim here... but 1.5 "stars" is the more adequate range.

Norma says

Tradition is a body of customs and beliefs that are valued by a culture. The Jovita González and Eve Raleigh narrative "Caballero A Historical Novel" illustrates the establishments that are set by men and designed to dominate women. In the story, paternal traditions administer a strict code for women and men, codes which are meant to govern the lives of the elite and which must never be breached. The code of the hidalgo is upheld even by those who condemn it, illustrating a tension that infuses the novel.

Don Santiago de Mendoza y Soriá, the patriarch and main protagonist, has for nearly one hundred years ruled over his family; that is if one counts the years from when his forefathers first established Rancho La Palma de Cristo. For Don Santiago, to abandon the sacred rules of tradition, simply for appeasing his own conscious or those of his family, would be a disgrace and would brand him as a failure. In order to uphold honor and tradition, Don Santiago must preserve the code of the hidalgo, a masculine epithet given to those born to nobility. The code begins with Don Santiago and continues down to "[h:]is wife, his sister, sons, and daughters [who:] bowed to his wishes..." This is a tradition which was upheld and reinforced by the Mendoza y Soriá family members, including the peons, or servants and representatives to the Catholic Church (33).

Sarah says

read in the context of its historical time (written by a Tejana in the early 1900s) it is groundbreaking. Read with an eye for language in today's context, it's a bit hokey and predictable. Read it for an interesting historical/political subtexts and not the story itself.

Jessie Entwistle says

A historical look at the way that the the signing of Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo affected the Mendzoa y Soria family.

Natalia Swierczek says

The 1830's Mexico-Texas of Wuthering Heights in regards to the amount of characters. There is actually a character list at the beginning of the book, with most being totally irrelevant to the story as a whole. My main reason for liking this book as much as I did was Jovita Gonzalez's implicit and unconventional, yet effective, feminist message within.

I'm no history buff but would recommend it to anyone interested in the Texas Revolution, Texas Rangers, or just an elaborate and thoroughly detailed image of Mexican cowboy dress...

Dusty says

Caballero is both a romantic epic and a novel of female empowerment amidst 19th Century patriarchal aristocracy -- kind of like *Gone With The Wind* divided by *Pride and Prejudice* and set near Matamoros/Brownsville in the time of the U.S. México War. (I know, that's a complicated fusion.) It's a classic proto-Chicana story, and so far it's the best book I've read for my Early Mexican-American fiction class, the first I recommend not just because it's important but because it is *gripping*. In particular I admired the invention of Doña Dolores, Luis Gonzaga and María de los Ángeles, three characters who poke holes in Don Santiago de Mendoza y Soría's patriarchal *machismo* tyranny with uncompromising but nonviolent conviction. Wish Goodreads would let me award four and a half stars.
