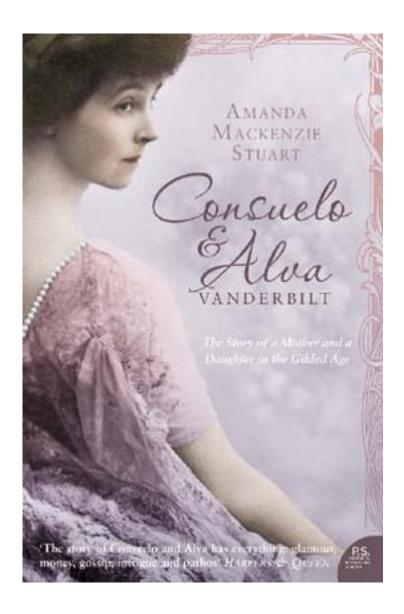
Consuelo and Alva Vanderbilt



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When Consuelo Vanderbilt's grandfather died, he was the richest man in America. Her father soon started to spend the family fortune, enthusiastically supported by Consuelo's mother, Alva, who was determined to take the family to the top of New York society—forcing a heartbroken Consuelo into a marriage she did not want with the underfunded Duke of Marlborough. But the story of Consuelo and Alva is more than a tale of enterprising social ambition, Gilded Age glamour, and the emptiness of wealth. It is a fascinating account of two extraordinary women who struggled to break free from the world into which they were born—a world of materialistic concerns and shallow elitism in which females were voiceless and powerless—and of their lifelong dedication to noble and dangerous causes and the battle for women's rights.

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