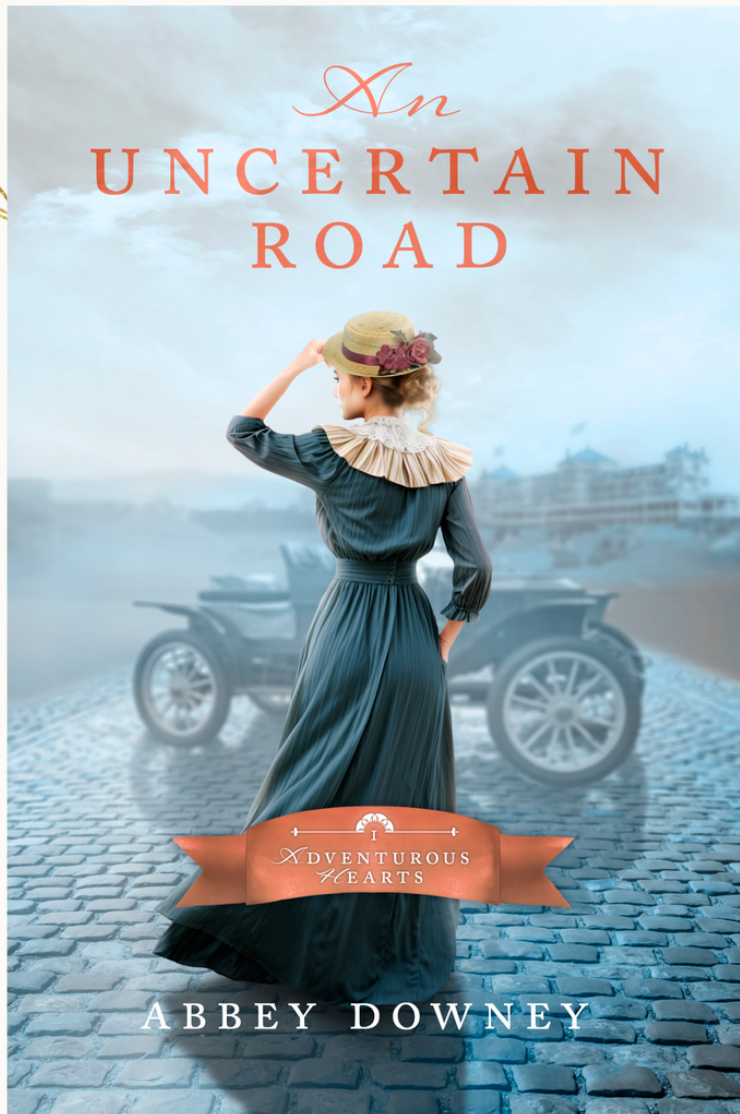


Book Club Kit



ADVENTUROUS
HEARTS

ABBEY DOWNEY

Meet the author

Abbey Downey started writing inspirational romance stories during naptime when her kids were babies and found she couldn't stop. She previously published two books with Love Inspired Historical under the pen name Mollie Campbell. She also works with Spark Flash Fiction producing a quarterly digital magazine that contains love stories under 1000 words.

A life-long Midwestern girl, Abbey lives in central Indiana with her husband, two kids, and one rather enthusiastic beagle. She loves watching her kids play sports and fixing up a 1900 farmhouse with her husband. Connect with Abbey at abbeydowney.com.



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Dear readers

I'm so glad you chose to pick up *An Uncertain Road* and read about Flora and Jensen. I love these two characters. They have so much to overcome and learn, but I think we can probably all relate to them in one way or another. Aren't there times when we all try to control what's going on in our lives only to find we aren't big enough to make anything go how we want?

Just like Flora and Jensen, the good news for us is that God has it all under control. All the big things, all the little things. And He cares enough about us to work those things out for our good. He isn't cold and uncaring like so many human-created gods. He wants to give us good gifts. What a beautiful truth!

I hope you'll also enjoy the real-life history in this story. I often spend time thinking about what it was like for women in the past who tried to push past what their culture told them was right for them to pursue what God had placed in their hearts. The *Adventurous Hearts* series was inspired by some of those amazing women. In *An Uncertain Road*, Flora is based off those strong, independent, persistent women.

Then there's Jensen. Ah, my grumpy, hurt hero. I just love his gruff nature and desire to protect those he cares about. Whether I intend to or not, every hero I write gets a bit of my husband written in. That's where Jensen got his ability to work with his hands and fix things.

Thank you again for reading this story. I hope if you enjoy it that you'll take a moment to leave a review on Amazon or Goodreads so other readers will know if they would like it, too. And be sure to watch for book two in the series releasing in November 2024!

Happy reading,

Abbey



Discussion questions

- Flora and Jensen both lost someone dear to them while racing, but they reacted in very different ways. Which one would you be most like in that sort of situation?
- Jensen believes the best way to protect those he cares about is to control the external forces around them. How does that belief contradict what the Bible tells us?
- Would you like to have lived in 1905? Why or why not?
- What about Jensen's or Flora's faith journey resonated with you?
- Are there any lessons in this book that you can put to work in your own life?
- Did you learn anything about life in 1905 or historic auto racing that you didn't know before?
- What was your favorite moment in Jensen and Flora's love story?
- What would you say is a theme of *An Uncertain Road*? What does that theme mean in your life?
- Are you inspired to do anything new after reading about Jensen and Flora's journey?
- Both Jensen and Flora learn to let go of ways they tried to control the events in their lives. What are the negative results of trying to control our lives instead of letting God handle it?



Extra historical details

The group's stop at Coney Island is one of my favorite parts of the book, particularly the scene in the Trip to the Moon ride. There's not a lot of evidence of what some of those early attractions were like. Many of them were short-lived and the interiors weren't photographed. But I found a source that mentioned green cheese displayed on the walls of the attraction for visitors to try and I couldn't resist including it.

The 1905 Glidden Reliability Tour details are largely true to history. All the locations and dates are accurate. The only big change I made was to the accident on the bridge. That actually occurred early in the tour. While it did involve the real female driver, Joan Newton Cuneo, it was her car that overturned. Incredibly enough, they got it out of the ravine, and she was able to drive it for several more days. In the end, a mechanical issue kept her from finishing the tour.

In the early 1900s, cars were quickly gaining in popularity, but infrastructure was undeveloped. Roads were mostly dirt, there was no consistent signage or driving rules, and road maps mostly didn't exist. The AAA was formed in 1902 when several automobile clubs came together for the purpose of improving driving at a national level. The AAA began holding reliability tours to show the public that cars were sturdy enough to handle cross-country travel as well as bringing attention to the condition of roads. 1905 was the first AAA tour to bear Charles Jasper Glidden's name, because he sponsored a large trophy for the tour winner.

The tour lasted 10 days and covered 1,740 miles. It was a social event along with a race. As you read in *An Uncertain Road*, most cars held not only the driver but also passengers and a ride-along mechanic who could fix the numerous mechanical problems the teams faced on the rough roads. In 1905, 33 drivers started the tour and 27 finished. The winner, Percy P. Pierce, was chosen by vote from among those who finished with a perfect score, which was actually most of the field.

Extra historical details

Another really fun scene for me to write was the Climb to the Clouds hillclimb that occurred at the midpoint of the tour. That race up Mount Washington in New Hampshire still occurs every year. The 7-mile road up the mountain has over 70 corners, many of them hairpin. It was dirt and gravel until the 1960s. In 1903, the first drive up it clocked in at 1 hour and 45 minutes. The next year, at the inaugural hillclimb, the record was set at 24 minutes, 37 seconds. The winner in the 1905 climb which is featured in the book made it in 20 minutes, 58 seconds. In comparison, the most recent time was 5 minutes, 28 seconds. I was fascinated to recently learn that Mount Washington holds the world record for the highest wind speed ever measured on the earth's surface!

Flora's car is another favorite bit of history for me. As pictured here, she drives a 1901 Decauville tonneau (which means it had a back seat). The Decauville company was a locomotive manufacturer in France that attempted to make automobiles from 1897-1911. One of their earliest cars had a double seat, then a small rear-facing seat in front of it, so that the driver was looking at the passengers while driving! I chose this car for Flora for several reasons. First, it worked well to give her a French car, since she started racing in France. Second, there was a Decauville in the 1905 Glidden Tour. Third, this model was a great race car. It was particularly well-built for the rough roads on the tour because it was sturdy, had advanced suspension, and was equipped with a solid metal plate underneath that protected the components from damage.



Theme ideas

I love a good themed party! If you want to do something extra special for a meeting to talk about *An Uncertain Road*, here are a few ideas to get you started:

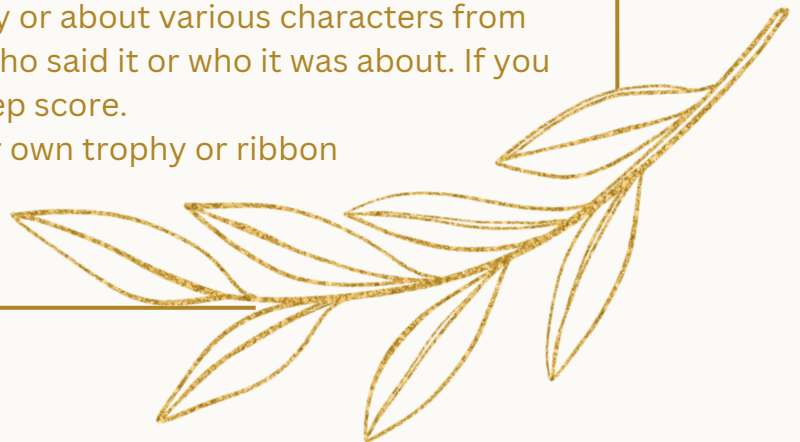
Decorations

- Checked flags
- Plastic loving cup trophies
- Hot Wheels/Matchbox cars
- Toy tires (such as from Lego sets)
- Food cans with printed oil can labels



Activities

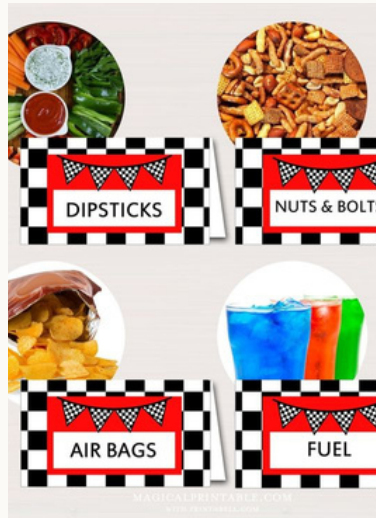
- On entering, give each member a name tag in a lanyard, like racing credentials
- Game: members read quotes by or about various characters from the book. Others try to guess who said it or who it was about. If you want, divide into teams and keep score.
- Send everyone home with their own trophy or ribbon



Theme ideas

Food

- Chocolate donut “tires”
- Snack mix “nuts and bolts”
- Drinks “fuel,” “motor oil,” or “antifreeze”
- Fruit or dessert “traffic lights”
- Racetrack food: soft pretzels, hot dogs, popcorn



Adventurous Hearts Series

Watch for the rest of the series
coming from Wild Heart Books

Book #2: November 2024

Book #3: July 2025

