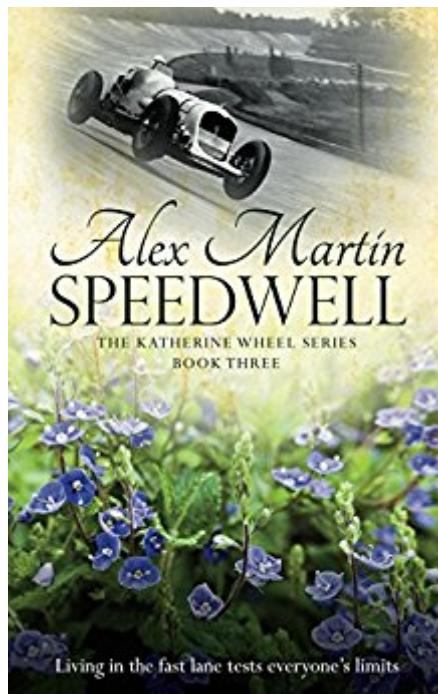


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# Speedwell (The Katherine Wheel Book 3)



## **Synopsis**

Short description: In this unusual motor racing drama, feisty heroine, Katy, becomes a woman entrepreneur of the 20th century. Read this refreshing new take on 1920s historical fiction to find out if she makes it. More detail: Katy and Jem enter the 1920's with their future in the balance. How can they possibly make their new enterprise work? They must risk everything, including disaster, and trust their gamble will pay off. Cassandra, juggling the demands of a young family, aging parents and running Cheadle Manor, distrusts the speed of the modern age, but Douglas races to meet the new era, revelling in the freedom of the open road. Can each marriage survive the strain the new dynamic decade imposes? Or will the love they share deepen and carry them through? They all arrive at destinies that surprise them in Speedwell, the third book and another heartbreaking romance in the Katherine Wheel true love trilogy.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This book caught my attention by the title and the race car on the cover. And even though I hadn't read the first two books of the series, I checked out the description, then a portion of the sample and bought it. Auto mechanic Katy (Katherine) Phipps, proprietor of Katherine Wheel Garage, is struggling to eke out a living in 1920s England, having apparently learned her trade in

World War I. Her husband Jem (short for Jeremy) handles many of the building maintenance and household duties, including growing vegetables for themselves and for sale. Jem lost half an arm during the war, but doesn't whine about it. Their humble home and workshop are a short distance from the manor of their unlikely friends Cass (Cassandra) and Douglas, who is an American who met his wife during the war. Cass, a daughter of wealth, privilege, and minor nobility, drove an ambulance during the war, which was probably when she and Katy became friends. Katy and her family were once servants at the manor, though, so they must have been acquainted. Anyway, Since Doug and Cass helped fund Katy and Jem to get the garage up and running, and since there isn't much for Doug to do at the manor, coupled with the fact that he and the in-laws aren't too fond of each other and it's actually their place, Doug periodically stops by the garage to help out. The problem is, he isn't much help. But he is amiable and charming, and by mutual agreement he begins selling new cars out of Katy's shop. Doug is a car guy who loves to drive, so it's a perfect fit. Soon Doug and Katy end up concocting a scheme to go racing, promote business for both of them. This story is heartwarming, heart-wrenching, and thought provoking. And although it isn't a fast read, like many sagas, and isn't of the genre I read often, it's a compelling tale.

Speedwell is the last book in the Katherine Wheel series and as usual, Martin has continued her effortless creation of village life in post-WWI England. By focusing on two families at either end of society, she has neatly breasted many of the issues facing that rapidly changing time. Her settings are perfectly moulded, her characters strongly delineated and the plot moves along at a steady pace. I found I was happy to retire to bed each night and continue the drama. Martin's research is thorough and I can only say that vehicle history enthusiasts will not be disappointed on any level. I have always felt that this series would lend itself beautifully to television drama and Martin has cemented that thought for me with Book Three. In addition, after finishing it, I'm not convinced there may not be more. It was a nicely open conclusion. Five stars.

I really enjoyed the third book in this series. I'm hoping there is a fourth book as the ending left a few unanswered questions. I wasn't sure I would like it a well with the racing theme but it blended into the story well. I would recommend all three books.

This is the third novel in the series and the author does an admirable job of blending hard fact with fiction. A lot of historical fiction can be plodding and bogged down with detail. A truly formidable

level of research has gone into this novel, bringing a high level of believability and a strong sense of place, occasion and character. And although there are lots of historical facts underpinning this book, it remains immensely readable. Speedwell takes us into the roaring twenties, and the advent of the motor car. It was an era of great social change when the upper classes began to slide into some decline and the rise of the working man, or woman in this case, began to rise. Refreshing that the heroine of the tale is a car mechanic and not the standard nurse. A good solid read, with interesting development of all the characters through these exciting times.

Alex Martin's books just get better and better and they have all been immensely enjoyable right from the first. The third in the series, Speedwell, has a compelling start that whisks us off into an intriguing adventure. A fascinating set of characters weave their magical story through a daring enterprise just after the end of the Great War. The story travels from humble but daring beginnings in a small Wiltshire village with Katy and Jem and takes us to Boston in the USA and back. There is such a richness of plot here to keep us glued to the characters' triumphs and defeats, loves, losses and surprises too. It's a tale full, rich and massively entertaining and compelling. Each book is complete in itself but if you start with this one you'll want to go back to the first and read them all. That's a joy to look forward to and so is waiting for the next book in the series. Can't wait for that! I couldn't put this one down.

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