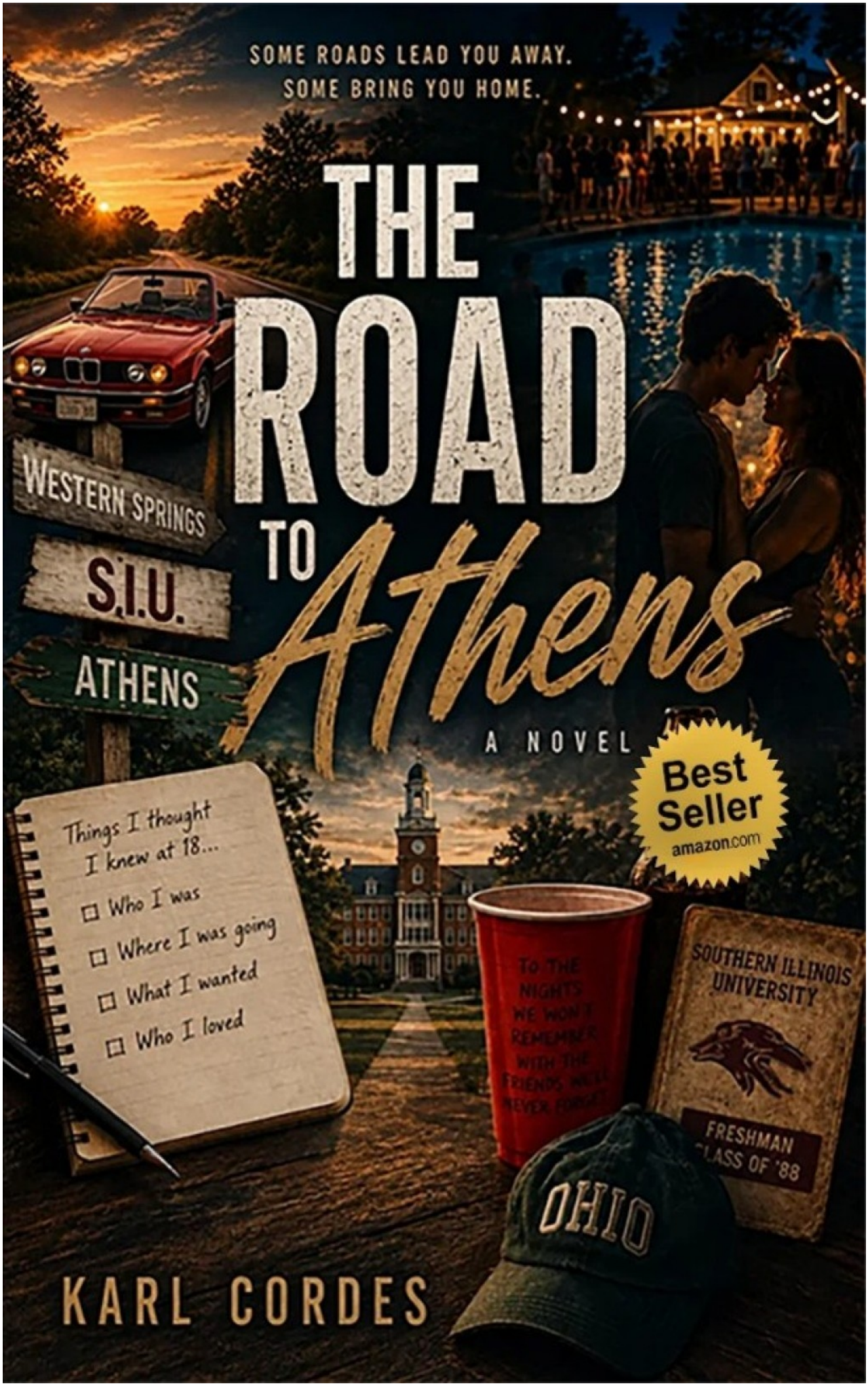
Karl Cordes' The Road to Athens Earned Triple Amazon Bestseller Recognition with Its Story of Faith and New Beginnings

Karl Cordes' The Road to Athens became an Amazon bestseller in three categories, celebrating a powerful 1980s story of faith, first love, and second chances.


SOME ROADS LEAD YOU AWAY.
SOME BRING YOU HOME.
THE ROAD TO Athens
A NOVEL
WESTERN SPRINGS
S.I.U.
ATHENS
Best Seller
amazon.com
Things I thought I knew at 18...
Who I was
Where I was going
What I wanted
Who I loved
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
FRESHMAN
OHIO
KARL CORDES

Naperville, Illinois Nov 17, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - *Can one wrong turn change the course of a lifetime and lead to a future more meaningful than anything you ever imagined?*

That question drives *The Road to Athens*, the debut novel by Karl Cordes, which has achieved Amazon bestseller status in three categories spanning religious fiction, Christian fiction, and religion and spirituality for teen and young adult readers. The milestone marks an exciting achievement for a story about growing up, facing consequences, discovering faith, and realizing that second chances can change everything.

Set in the fall of 1988, *The Road to Athens* transports readers to a time before smartphones, social media, and digital footprints, when friendships were forged in dormitory hallways, relationships survived through late-night telephone calls, and life's biggest mistakes weren't broadcast to the world.

Eighteen-year-old Ethan Brooks believes he has his future figured out. He's leaving suburban Chicago for Southern Illinois University, surrounded by loyal friends, youthful confidence, and dreams of the life ahead.

Then one reckless summer decision changes everything.

Suddenly, the excitement of freshman year collides with betrayal, heartbreak, complicated relationships, and consequences Ethan never imagined. Between unforgettable nights in Carbondale, unexpected friendships, and moments that test his character, Ethan discovers that becoming an adult has little to do with age and everything to do with accountability, forgiveness, and courage.

But this isn't simply another college coming-of-age story.

It's a deeply human exploration of the people who enter our lives, the ones we lose, the friends who refuse to abandon us, and the extraordinary ways faith can emerge when everything familiar falls apart.

As Ethan's journey unfolds, the road from Southern Illinois to Athens, Ohio, becomes something far greater than a change of universities. It becomes a journey toward redemption, belonging, love, and the realization that sometimes God's greatest plans begin where our own fall apart.

“Seeing The Road to Athens become an Amazon bestseller in three categories has been an incredible milestone for me as a debut author,” said Karl Cordes in a recent interview. *“I wrote this story to capture a time in life when every friendship mattered, every mistake felt enormous, and the future was still unwritten. To see the book achieve this recognition is deeply rewarding. My hope is that readers connect with Ethan's journey and come away believing that no matter how many wrong turns we take, faith, forgiveness, and second chances can lead us somewhere extraordinary.”*

Drawing on the atmosphere of college life in the late 1980s, Cordes blends humor, nostalgia, romance, and spiritual reflection into a story that speaks across generations.

For readers who remember 1988, it's a trip back to the unforgettable years of first independence. For younger readers, it's a reminder that uncertainty, heartbreak, and imperfect choices are not the end of

the story.

For more information about the author and his book, visit https://theroadtoathens.com/.

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About the Author

Karl Cordes is a first-time novelist whose work explores friendship, faith, personal growth, and the transformative experiences of young adulthood. He grew up in Western Springs, Illinois. He started his college journey at Southern Illinois University in 1988 and transferred to Ohio University, where he graduated in 1992 with a degree in communications.

He lives in Naperville, Illinois, with his wife Michelle and their faithful companion, Samson, a five-year-old Boxer.

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