BOOK FOUR · MONACO

Dash

A Story About a Town So Small It Turns Into a Racetrack

BOOK 4

TRACK	WHERE	MONSTER	ISBN
Circuit de Monaco	Monaco, on the Mediterranean	Dash, in the old stone walls	979-8-9973861-5-3

The story in brief



Monaco's secret is that there isn't a racetrack there at all, just a town. Enzo and Leni visit their cousin Alex, who lives right on the street where the race cars zoom past. People say something lives in the old stone walls that never forgives a single mistake. When the race barriers come down, the four of them walk the course looking for Dash. Alex's ball bounces away down the steep hill toward the harbor, and a wall leans over and catches it. Dash isn't unforgiving. He keeps things safe and holds everyone close.

> **Big idea:** Notice what has been right beside you all along, including the neighbors and places you pass every day.

Real track facts

- Monaco is a tiny **city-state** on the Mediterranean Sea: a city that is also its own country, with its own flag and a prince. It's the second-smallest country in the world.
- Building the track takes about **six weeks**, and taking it down takes about **three more**. That's nine weeks of work for one weekend of racing.
- At its tightest spots, the track is only about **25 feet wide**. A race car is about six and a half feet across, so there's barely room for three side by side.
- The hill drops about **138 feet** from the casino to the harbor, more than twice Twist's drop in Book 1, but a little at a time.
- Cars race through a tunnel under a hotel, and around the slowest corner in top-level racing.
- In 1955, a driver crashed into the harbor and swam out.

RACING PHRASE TO KNOW

Street circuit

Most racetracks are built just for racing. A street circuit is made of ordinary streets that people drive, walk their dogs on, and live beside. For one weekend, barriers turn the town into a racetrack.

Words to know

street circuit · barrier · harbor · hairpin · tunnel · shutters · neighbor · tidy

Find it on a map

Find France on a world map, then look for tiny Monaco on its southern coast, near Italy. How far is it from the other three tracks?

BOOK FOUR · DASH

Talk about it

Before reading

1. What would it be like if race cars zoomed down your street?
2. The book says Monaco's secret is that there isn't a racetrack there at all. How can that be?

While reading

3. Leni measures the street with her thumb. How many cars do you think can fit side by side?
4. Leni notices that every shutter is perfectly straight. Why might that be a clue?
5. What do you think will happen to Alex's ball?

After reading

6. People said Dash never forgives a single mistake. What did the children find out?
7. Dash says most racers go too quickly to really see him. What do you rush past without noticing?
8. Alex walks past Dash every day but never says good morning. Why do you think that changed?
9. Leni writes, "Not unforgiving. Just holding close." What does she mean?

Try it: How Many Cars Fit?

Math · Ages 4–8

You need: masking tape, a tape measure, and large paper or cardboard "cars" cut about 6½ feet long (or children lying down).

1. Mark two tape lines 25 feet apart. That's Monaco's street at its narrowest.
2. Lay the cars between the lines, side by side, like Leni's thumb test. How many fit?
3. Three cars fit (19½ feet). A fourth would need 26 feet, so it won't fit! Just as Leni said, "Four would be a squeeze!"

Younger children can do this with toy cars and a short strip of paper "street": how many fit across?

Look Closer

"Alex walked past Dash every day and never gave him a second look. What do you walk past every day? Look closer. What do you see?"

Take a Noticing Walk around your school. Each child finds one thing they've never noticed before and draws it.

Math challenge · Grades 2–3

Twist's Corkscrew drops 59 feet. Monaco's hill drops 138 feet. How much farther does Monaco drop? (Answer: 79 feet.)

Draw two bars to compare them. Which drop happens all at once, and which happens a little at a time?

PRINTABLE WORKSHEET

My Monster Story Map

Name

Book

Works with any Track Monsters book. Younger children can draw their answers; older children can write them.

The track 1
Where does the story happen?

The legend 2
What scary story do people tell?

Leni's puzzle 3
What numbers or clues didn't add up?

Looking closer 4
How did they find the monster?

The truth 5
What was the monster really doing?

Grandpa Vito 6
What did he finally see?

Draw the monster

© 2026 Vittorio Valentino · Free to copy for classroom use