BOOK TWO · DAYTONA

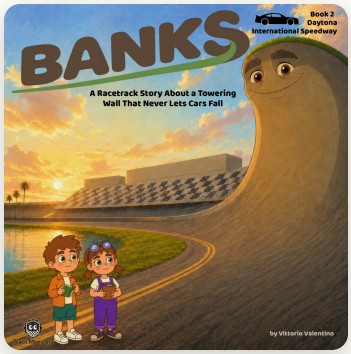
Banks

A Racetrack Story About a Towering Wall That Never Lets Cars Fall

BOOK 2

TRACK	WHERE	MONSTER	ISBN
Daytona International Speedway	Daytona Beach, Florida, USA	Banks, the high banked wall	979-8-9973861-2-2

The story in brief



At Daytona, the stock cars race high up a giant curved wall without ever sliding down. Leni can't make the numbers add up: the wall is as steep as their stairs at home, the cars stick like glue, and there's a whole lake in the middle of the racetrack. When the track goes quiet for the night, Enzo tries to climb the wall and slips. The wall itself rises up to catch him and Leni. It's Banks, a colossal, gentle creature who has been holding every car safely on the track since the very first lap.

> **Big idea:** The scariest ones can turn out to be the kindest. Some of the things that hold us up are so big we forget to notice them.

Real track facts

- The turns are banked at **31 degrees**, about as steep as the staircase in your house, but smooth with nothing to hold on to.
- The banking climbs about **20 feet**, as tall as a two-story house. Each step toward the top rises about six inches.
- On a flat turn, a car going nearly 200 miles an hour would slide right off. The banking lets the car's **own speed press it against the track**. The faster it goes, the harder the banking holds it.
- The cars only turn left, racing counterclockwise.
- **Lake Lloyd** (about 29 acres) sits in the middle. Builders dug the dirt out of the infield to raise the banks, and the hole filled with water. The founder stocked it with 65,000 fish.
- Daytona opened in 1959. The first race finished so close it took 61 hours to decide the winner.

RACING WORD TO KNOW

Tri-oval

Most oval tracks look like a stretched-out circle. At Daytona, one side bends gently outward, like the round back of a letter D, so people in the stands can watch the cars all the way around.

Words to know

banked · steep · degree · counterclockwise · infield · colossal · gentle · protractor

Find it on a map

Find Florida on a U.S. map. Daytona Beach is on the Atlantic coast. Is it north, south, east, or west of where you live?

Talk about it

Before reading

1. Have you ever climbed something so steep that you wanted to use your hands?
2. Look at the cover. What do you notice about the wall? What could be hiding there?

While reading

3. Leni writes, "That shouldn't work." What is she puzzled about?
4. Leni lists three clues: steep as stairs, cars that stick like glue, and a lake in the middle. What do you think connects them?
5. What do you think will happen when Enzo starts to climb?

After reading

6. How does Banks help the cars stay on the track?
7. Where did the lake come from, in the story and in real life?
8. Banks says hardly anyone has stopped to learn his name. Why do you think that is?
9. Leni writes, "The scariest ones keep turning out to be the kindest." Do you agree? Why?

Try it: Bowl Racers

Science · Ages 3–8

You need: a flat paper plate, a large mixing or salad bowl, and a ping-pong ball. (Use a ping-pong ball rather than marbles with young children.)

1. Roll the ball around the edge of the flat plate. What happens? It rolls right off the side.
2. Now swirl the ball around the inside of the bowl, fast. The sloped side keeps it going around, just like Daytona's banked turns.
3. Swirl it slowly. What happens? It slides down to the bottom, just like Grandpa Vito's car did when he went too slow.

Talk about it: the faster the ball goes, the higher it rides and the better the bowl holds it, exactly like Banks.

Look Closer

"Banks looked scary until we looked closer. Who holds you up, every single day? Look closer today, then give them a hug."

Make a "Who Holds Me Up" drawing: draw yourself in the middle and the people who help you all around you.

Math challenge · Grades 2–3

Daytona's banking climbs about 20 feet. Each step up rises about 6 inches. How many steps would it take to reach the top?

Hint: there are 12 inches in a foot. (Answer: 20 feet = 240 inches, and 240 ÷ 6 = 40 steps.)

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

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