BOOK THREE · INDIANAPOLIS

Rusty

A Racetrack Story About Three Million Bricks That Never Left

BOOK 3

TRACK	WHERE	MONSTER	ISBN
Indianapolis Motor Speedway	Indianapolis, Indiana, USA	Rusty, under the whole track	979-8-9973861-3-9

The story in brief



After the big race at Indianapolis, the winner does two puzzling things: he drinks a bottle of milk, and he kisses the bricks. Grandpa Vito says the whole track used to be made of three million bricks, and Leni can't stop wondering where they all went. Enzo has a different question: what is under the track? When he gets all the way down on the bricks, the way the winner did, he hears a low hum. It's Rusty, stretched under the whole track. The bricks never went anywhere.

> **Big idea:** Some of the most important things have been there all along, quietly carrying us. Saying thank you is how we show we've noticed.

Real track facts

- The Speedway opened in **1909**. That autumn, the whole two-and-a-half-mile oval was paved with **3.2 million bricks**, laid by hand. People started calling it the Brickyard.
- Each brick weighs about ten pounds.
- Starting in the 1930s, the track was covered with asphalt. By 1961, only one strip of bricks was left showing, at the start and finish line: **a yard wide, 50 feet long, and 576 bricks** you can count yourself.
- Nearly all the other bricks are **still down there**, under the track. In 2025, workers fixing a bump uncovered some for the first time since 1937.
- Winners have celebrated with milk since 1936, when Louis Meyer asked for buttermilk. Kissing the bricks started in 1996.

RACING PHRASE TO KNOW

Three-wide start

Most races start with cars two by two. At Indianapolis, 33 cars line up three across in eleven rows, side by side by side. It's the widest start in racing.

Words to know

tradition · brick · asphalt · oval · seam · century · grateful

Find it on a map

Find Indiana on a U.S. map. Indianapolis is right in the middle of the state. Which of the first three tracks is closest to you?

Talk about it

Before reading

1. What traditions does your family have on special days?
2. The title says three million bricks "never left." Where do you think they could be?

While reading

3. Grandpa Vito says the winners kiss the bricks because of "tradition." Why doesn't Enzo think that's the whole answer?
4. Leni writes down her guesses: trucks, sold, buried. What would you guess?
5. Why do you think Enzo gets all the way down on the bricks?

After reading

6. Rusty says, "Most people don't look deep enough." What does he mean?
7. Why do you think the winners kiss the bricks? What did Enzo decide?
8. Rusty says carrying the cars felt "Heavy. Good heavy." What is something that feels like hard work but good?
9. Leni writes, "Present and accounted for." What does that mean?

Try it: The Three-Wide Start

Math · Ages 3–8

You need: 33 toy cars, blocks, or paper cars (or the class itself!) and masking tape.

1. Make a "Yard of Bricks" finish line with masking tape on the floor.
2. Line the cars up three across, side by side by side. Count the rows as you go. How many rows does it take to fit all 33? (Answer: 11 rows.)
3. Younger children: count the cars by ones, then count each row of three. Older children: skip-count by threes.

Extend it: try lining up the same cars two by two. How many rows now? Which start is wider? Which is longer?

Look Closer

"Rusty stayed through a hundred years of racing, quietly carrying every race on his back. Who in your life is like that? Look deeper. Then thank them."

Build a class Thank-You Wall: each child writes or draws a thank-you on a paper brick for someone who quietly helps them.

Math challenge · Grades 2–3

The real Yard of Bricks has 576 bricks. How many hundreds, tens, and ones is that?

The yard is 3 feet wide and 50 feet long. Mark it out with chalk on the playground. How many children can stand on it?

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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