BOOK ONE · LAGUNA SECA

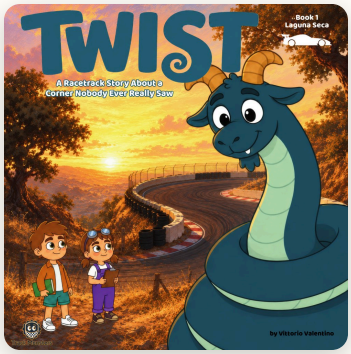
Twist

A Racetrack Story About a Corner Nobody Ever Really Saw

BOOK 1

TRACK	WHERE	MONSTER	ISBN
Laguna Seca Raceway	Monterey, California, USA	Twist, at the Corkscrew	979-8-9973861-1-5

The story in brief



Up on the hill at Laguna Seca, the race cars drive in behind the trees and vanish. People who race there tell a story about something called The Twist that swallows cars whole. When the track closes for the night, Enzo, Leni, and Grandpa Vito walk up to the famous Corkscrew to look. Enzo's sketchbook tumbles over the edge, the kids start sliding, and something long and coiled catches them. Twist isn't swallowing cars at all. He's shy, a little clumsy, and he catches whatever falls.

> **Big idea:** Someone who seems scary may just be shy. Twist hides because he's afraid of being seen tripping over his own tail.

Real track facts

- The Corkscrew at Laguna Seca Raceway is one of the most famous corners in all of racing.
- The track drops **59 feet in only 450 feet** of track. That's about the height of a 5½-story building, in roughly two seconds at racing speed.
- The steepest point is an **18% grade**, like the biggest, fastest slide at the playground.
- For about two and a half seconds, drivers **can't see the track at all**, only treetops and sky.
- So drivers pick one tree ahead of time and aim straight for it, trusting the track will be there when they land.
- One driver said the track is going to "catch you at the bottom," just like Twist does.

RACING WORD TO KNOW

Off-camber

Most turns lean in, like the inside of a bowl, which helps cars stick to the track. The steepest part of the Corkscrew leans the other way, like a plate tipping away from you. That makes it extra slippery.

Words to know

corkscrew · steep · grade · coiled · legend · vanish · clumsy · shy

Find it on a map

Find California on a U.S. map. Monterey is on the Pacific coast. Then find where you live. Is it closer or farther than you thought?

Talk about it

Before reading

1. Look at the cover. Does Twist look scary, friendly, or both? What makes you think so?
2. Have you ever been at the top of a hill so steep you couldn't see the bottom? How did it feel?

While reading

3. Why do the cars seem to disappear behind the trees?
4. Grandpa Vito drove through the Corkscrew a thousand times but never saw Twist. How could that be?
5. Leni says, "Cars can't just disappear. There has to be a reason!" What do you think the reason is?

After reading

6. Twist says, "I just catch things when they fall." How did your idea of Twist change from the beginning to the end?
7. Why does Twist curl up tight and hide? Have you ever wanted to hide?
8. Enzo says, "You're not hiding. You're catching." What does he mean?
9. Why do you think Grandpa Vito never saw Twist before?

Try it: The Disappearing Car

Science · Ages 3–8

You need: a board or stiff cardboard, a stack of books, a toy car, and a piece of tape.

1. Make a gentle ramp with one book. Crouch down at the top and roll the car. Can you see it the whole way down?
2. Add books to make the ramp steeper, with a sharp edge at the top. Now crouch at the top and look. Where does the car "disappear"?
3. Talk about it: the car didn't vanish. The track just dropped away faster than your eyes could follow, just like at the Corkscrew.

Extend it: put a tape mark at the bottom of the ramp. Like the drivers who aim at a tree, can children predict where the car will land before they let go?

Look Closer

"Twist curled up tight so nobody would see him. Do you know someone quiet who keeps to themselves? Look closer. Then say hello."

Invite each child to draw someone they could say hello to this week, and one kind thing they could say.

Math challenge · Grades 2–3

The Corkscrew drops 59 feet. Use a tape measure to mark 59 feet down a hallway or across the playground. How many of your steps is it? How many children lying head to toe would it take?

Save your answer for **Dash (Book 4)**, where the hill in Monaco drops even farther.

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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