

"We've got the Spirit, Stand Up and Cheer it!" Meet the Spirit team

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Staff Reporter

You may have seen them at sports games. You've probably seen them at pep assemblies. Spirit team- a group of students brought together with a love of performance and school spirit taking to the middle of the gym floor and spreading that passion to the rest of the school to an eruption of cheers and excitement.

While other performance groups may limit themselves to performing for a few sports teams, Spirit performs for all teams here at Shorewood, showing up for any home game and supporting their peers. They get to these games a few hours early to go over their routine, as well as practicing during SAS and during their semester-long class. But that's just the surface level of it all. Under the surface, Spirit Team is much more than a performance team- it's a community of support where anyone is welcome.

"You're comfortable around them even if you just met them," Aniya Lanier, a team member says. "You're welcome there and it's fun that you can be yourself around people." "There are genuine, amazing, very talented people on the team," Monica Carrillo, captain, says. "Everybody on the team is just so nice and unique in their own way, which just makes the team more fun." Carrillo joined Spirit this year after seeing how well they were doing last year and decided that she wanted to help spread the team's kindness and positivity, as well as meet some new people, becoming captain just this year. "My

favorite part is just how well we get along," she says. "As a team, we got really close together- we do so many things together, and I just love that part."

"Spirit is an inclusive team," says Liz Mayor, another member of Spirit. "People with disabilities or without disabilities can join and just show off their spirit to the school." She compares it to other performance teams, saying that Spirit is a lot more welcoming due to there not being any competition. "It's a lot more inclusive to people who don't have the stamina for the other teams," she says. "Spirit team is more chill." "Everyone's friendly," Lanier agrees. "It's a nice environment to be around." Though the team has formed a tight-knit community, they're far from exclusive. The team is always more than willing to welcome new people into the team and grow their membership.

"We love having new people, all the time," Carrillo says. "We will just welcome new people."

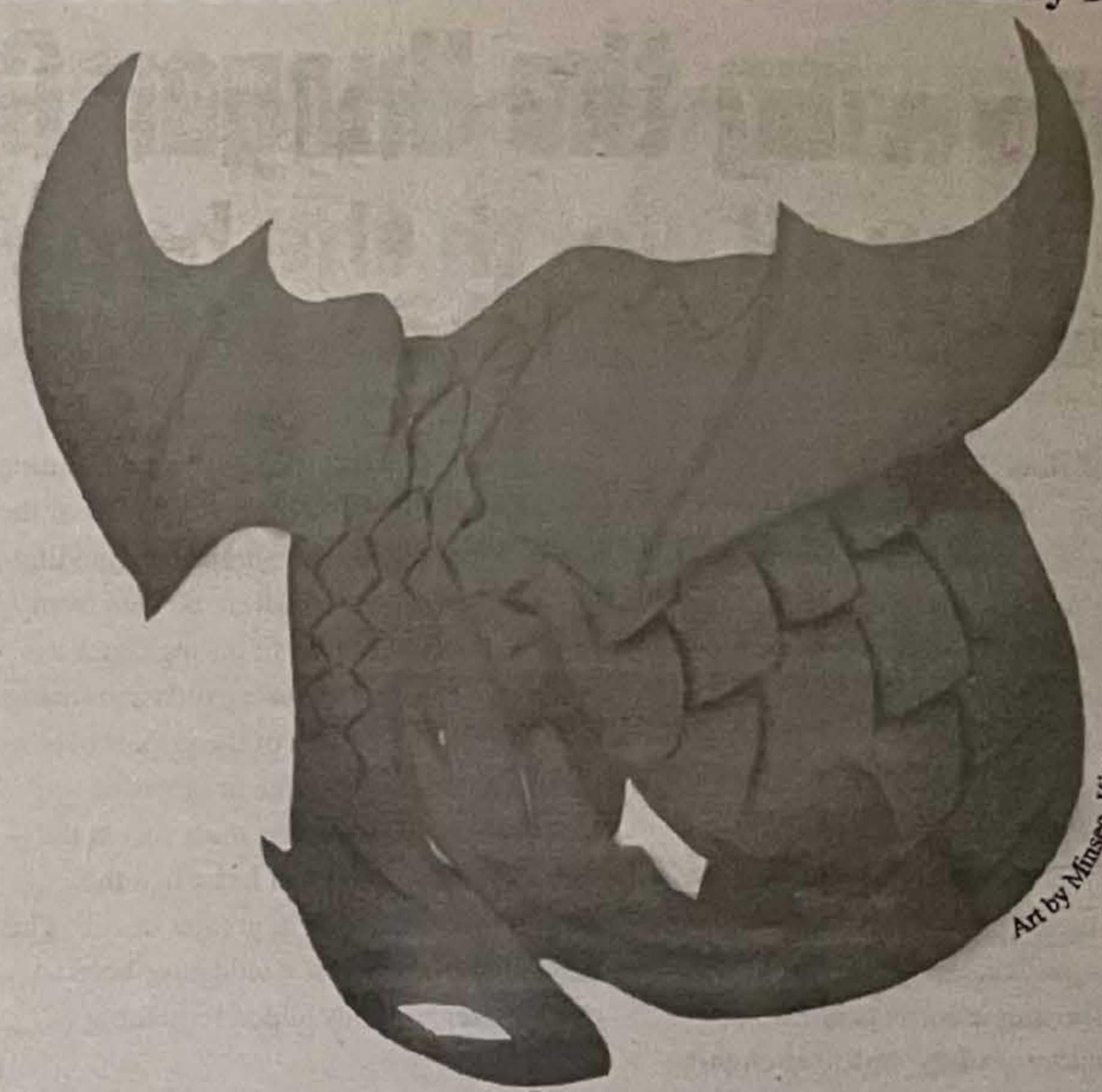
"You can join and do whatever you want to," Mayor says, then laughs and adds, "Well, not whatever you want to, but kind of like... just showing spirit to the school, or just having fun with the team."

"People should definitely join," Carrillo says. "It's really fun." So, if you're looking for a fun, supportive environment where you'll always feel welcome, consider joining Spirit. They'd love to have you.



Photo courtesy of Margaret Stubbs for Horizon

(Left to right) Mischa Grodin, Kristy Thompson, and Khilaynn Gray at practice.



Art by Mischa Kim

2023 Booktok books Take a look at the most influenced books of 2023

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Love. There's just something about reading of a love that fills your stomach with butterflies and your head with dreams of finding your special someone. 2023 in books brought this, and much more to the book community, and we are thankful for it. From the best-selling novel "Yellowface" by R.F. Kuang which faces the harsh truths of cultural appropriation, to the New York Times bestselling author Rebecca Yarros's book "Fourth Wing," which is filled with a fantastical romance that lures you and makes you wish dragons really did exist.

The real question though, is whether or not some 2023 book releases deserve the attention that they have received. What influences the majority of the book community is nothing more than a group of people who refer to themselves as "BookTok". With the hashtag, #booktok, being used in over 60 billion videos on social media, Booktok has both authors and readers in a chokehold.

But some of the biggest 2023 books on BookTok such as "Check and Mate" By Ali Hazelwood, an author who is widely known and supported by the BookTok community, are nothing more than copies and pastes of previous books. With the well-known and well-loved trope of enemies to lovers, Hazelwood's booklet fans down with another disappointing story.

Her attempt at sports rivals with an academic twist is a simple rom-com read, with no real depth or intricacy. The way BookTok has been fangirling over it for the past year is simply because of the amorous stereotypes that fill its pages. Although BookTok does not get everything right, they did do some things

right when helping to make "Divine Rivals" by Rebecca Ross an instant best seller. Ross creates a fantastical, historic world for us in the pages, using dual perspectives from both main characters to tell the story of family, magic, war, and love. BookTok had its very own love-at-first-sight moment when this book came out. They wasted no time in reading the second one, "Ruthless Vows," which came out just a few months after the first.

The phrase, "Don't judge a book by its cover" is widely known, but not practiced by most of the book community. Readers will be in a bookstore and see a cute little rom-com book cover and instantly assume that it's a short, fun, little read. This is not always the case, especially regarding "Happy Place" by Emily Henry. Henry is known for her romantic reads and, most of the time, does not disappoint. Sadly, when it comes to her latest release, she does nothing but that. "Happy Place" was made out to be a fun second chance romance, when in truth it's about two exes getting back together not even six months after breaking up. The absence of female empowerment and lack of depth in the side characters are just a few of many reasons why BookTok cannot be trusted when it comes to choosing what books should be popular.

BookTok falls head over heels for the same tropes at every turn. Falling for toxic males and burning tension between two characters, most Booktok books fail to develop unique storylines with characters that aren't like every other book persona. With overhyped, and popular reads filled with romance, life lessons, and magic, 2023 book releases will not be forgotten anytime soon.