

It's Not About The Pom Poms: The True Essence of Cheerleading

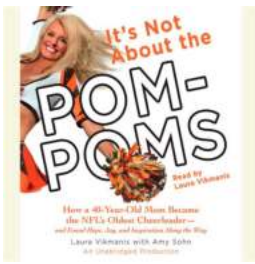
When people think of cheerleading, they often picture pom poms, high kicks, and energetic chants. However, what many fail to realize is that cheerleading is so much more than a display of cheerfulness and school spirit. It requires skill, dedication, and a deep love for the sport. In this article, we will explore the true essence of cheerleading, beyond the stereotypical image, and uncover the athleticism, teamwork, and personal growth that lies behind those pom poms.

The Evolution of Cheerleading

Cheerleading has come a long way since its inception in the late 19th century. Initially, it started as a male-dominated activity, primarily used to motivate the crowd during sporting events. However, over time, cheerleading evolved into a female-dominated sport that demands physical fitness, strength, and coordination. Today, cheerleaders are considered athletes in their own right, with routines that require agility, tumbling, stunting, and dance moves that rival those of professional dancers.

Athleticism and Skill

Cheerleading is not all about waving pom poms and shouting chants. It demands rigorous physical training, including cardio workouts, strength training, and flexibility exercises. Cheerleaders need to possess a wide range of skills, from tumbling and gymnastics to jumps, stunts, and dance. They spend countless hours honing their techniques, mastering difficult routines, and perfecting their timing. Behind each impressive performance, there is a lot of sweat, hard work, and dedication involved.



It's Not About the Pom-Poms: How a 40-Year-Old Mom Became the NFL's Oldest Cheerleader--and Found Hope, Joy, by Laura Vikmanis (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 4696 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 305 pages



The athleticism required in cheerleading is often underestimated. Cheerleaders need to be able to execute high-flying flips and twists, maintain perfect synchrony with their teammates, and perform powerful stunts that require strength and balance. It is a physically demanding sport that demands both endurance and finesse.

Teamwork and Trust

Cheerleading is not a solo endeavor but rather a team sport that heavily relies on collaboration and trust. Cheerleaders work together to execute complex routines, relying on each other for support and safety. In stunting, where cheerleaders perform acrobatic maneuvers by lifting and balancing each other, trust is paramount. They must have complete faith in their teammates' abilities and communicate effectively to ensure a flawless routine. The bond formed within a cheerleading team is unparalleled, as they rely on each other both physically and emotionally.

Personal Growth and Confidence

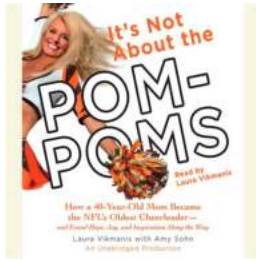
Beyond the physical aspect, cheerleading offers numerous opportunities for personal growth. Cheerleaders learn discipline, time management, and the importance of hard work from a young age. They develop self-confidence as they perform in front of large crowds, facing the pressure and scrutiny that comes with it. Cheerleading also fosters leadership skills as experienced members mentor and guide newcomers. It promotes a sense of responsibility and accountability, as each member plays a vital role in the team's success.

Cheerleading and Empowerment

Cheerleading is not just about the sport; it is also a platform for empowerment. It provides young athletes with a voice and a platform to advocate for causes they believe in. Many cheerleaders are involved in community service projects, spreading awareness about important issues and making a positive impact on society. Cheerleading teams often engage in competing and volunteering, promoting inclusivity and celebrating diversity. It encourages individuals to challenge societal norms, break barriers, and redefine traditional gender roles.

Cheerleading goes far beyond pom poms and stereotypical cheerfulness. It is a sport that requires immense athleticism, skill, teamwork, and personal growth. Cheerleaders are athletes who dedicate countless hours to training and perfecting their craft. They embody strength, agility, and grace, and their routines display artistry and precision. Cheerleading fosters trust, camaraderie, and self-confidence, allowing individuals to grow not only as athletes but also as responsible and empowered members of society. So the next time you see a cheerleader, remember that their journey goes far beyond the pom poms, and they deserve the respect and recognition as true athletes.

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A forty-year-old cheerleader? When Laura Vikmanis, a single mom in Ohio, told friends that she wanted to be an NFL cheerleader, they said it would never happen. But she proved them all wrong. . . .

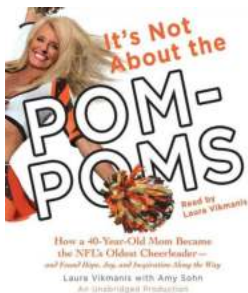
Laura Vikmanis has got spirit . . . and pom-poms, too! But before she stepped onto the field as the oldest cheerleader in the National Football League, she was sidelined by a bad marriage and the many responsibilities of stay-at-home motherhood. She finally got the courage to leave her husband and to ask herself something she had never asked before: What do I want to do? Remembering her teenage love of dance, she signed up for a pole-dancing fitness class, where she met a former cheerleader for the Cincinnati Bengals. When the woman suggested that Laura audition to be a “Ben-Gal,” Laura laughed her off but soon realized that the audition process could be a way of healing herself—and regaining her confidence. Her boots were made for walking—but also for stomping on a football field.

She tried out for the team next to girls young enough to be her daughters. Girls with tighter abs, fuller hair, no kids, and no crow’s-feet. After much adversity and multiple auditions, she finally made the team, becoming the oldest cheerleader in

the League.

It's Not About the Pom-Poms follows Laura's inspiring, funny, and eye-opening journey from demoralized divorcée to high-kicking Cincinnati Ben-Gal. Readers will cheer her on as she rediscovers her passion for dancing, takes hip-hop classes with twelve-year-olds, loses twenty-five pounds, discovers her abs, finds love again, and becomes a new kind of role model to her daughters. Laura also provides an inside look into the fascinating world of NFL cheerleaders—the grueling workouts, bad pay, twice-weekly weigh-ins, but, most important, the lifelong bond between the women, who do it all for the glory.

Leading with her heart, Laura Vikmanis faces adversity with her head held high as she learns in mid-life to take a flying leap. Powerful and uplifting, It's Not About the Pom-Poms shows that, no matter your age, it's never too late to go, fight, and win!



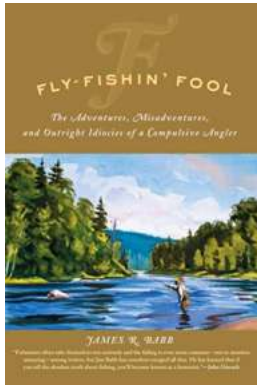
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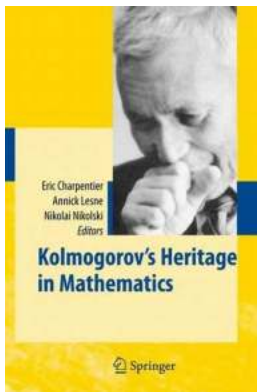
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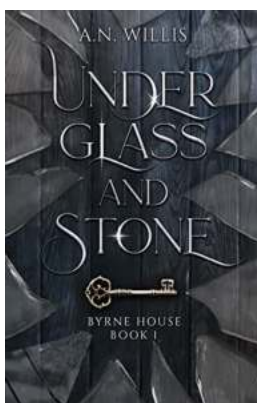
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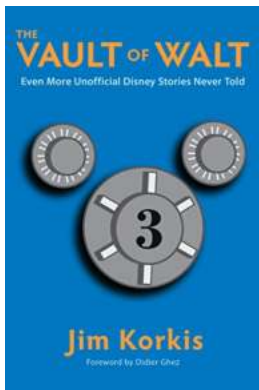
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