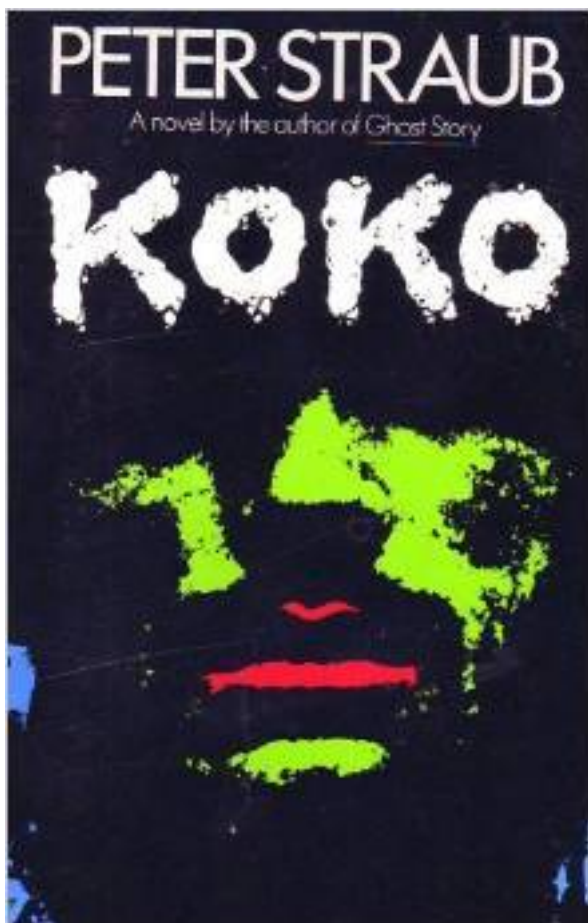

Peter Straub

Koko (Blue Rose Trilogy #1)



Title: Koko (Blue Rose Trilogy #1)

Author: Peter Straub

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Description

At the unveiling of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., four surviving members of an army platoon are reunited. Their current lives vastly differ in social station and degree of success however, they still can't shake memories of the hell they endured together in S.E. Asia; there is one reminder of the past that raises its ugly head

Insightful reviews

Anna Ligtenberg: ISBN 0451162145 - Tough book to review, but a pretty quick (not easy, just quick!) read, Koko is worth the time! I often feel like the number of typos that get through is a good indicator of how highly (or lowly) the book is seen by the publisher and Koko has a mere 6 in 595 pages - but two mistakes really bothered me. Early in the book, Conor's shirt has yellow letters and two pages later, the letters are orange; late in the book, Koko leaves a note which reads, in part, "I have no name" and is quoted two pages later as "I have no home". Petty? Sure - but I think most typos are due to poor proofreading and this type of thing is more likely the author's fault. I don't like simple continuity errors from an author like Straub, because I'm trusting him to write a complex story and if he can't keep simple things straight...

That said, Straub has done a great job with the big picture. In 1982, as Vietnam vets from all over the country flock to the new memorial wall in Washington, the killings begin - men are found dead, their heads mutilated, cards with "Koko" written on them in their mouths. Other than a small group of men who served together, no one has yet discovered that the killings are connected. Tina Pumo, Conor Linklater, Michael Poole and their rather aptly named former Lt. Harry Beevers gather in Washington for the memorial's opening and Harry proposes that they find the killer, because they all know his identity. Despite Harry's disturbing stance that they can make some money from this, the men agree to join him. Pumo remains in New York while the others return to Vietnam and set out to find Tim Underhill, a former member of their platoon and a crazed author who chose not to come home when the war ended.

The backstory is filled in, slowly, with flashbacks to the moment and place of Koko's creation - a cave in a small village in Vietnam, Ia Thuc. The atrocities of that day haunt all the men but none more than Koko, who has set out in his own way to right the wrongs they committed. This puts Linklater, Poole, Beevers and Pumo at the top of his hit list and they have to find him before he finds them.

One reviewer commented that he wanted to know what happened in the cave. The book does state what happened, but in tiny stages. The worst of it doesn't come out until very nearly the end of the book, as Harry's and Koko's paths begin to merge. How each of them perceives what happened is, ultimately, the reason for Koko's existence, so revealing it from the beginning would have detracted from the horror of it, making it seem not so much the sort of thing that would haunt men for over a decade. I, for one, also appreciated the way it was done because, really, the graphic details would have made the book too pornographic and far less worth reading.

In the end, the thing that makes this book a worthwhile read is the characters. Almost no one is who they seemed to be in the beginning, but the change in your perception isn't some abrupt thing forced on you by bad writing. It happens slowly, as one layer after another reveals clearly what you feel like you should have seen all along. Can you guess early on who the killer is? Sure, you CAN - there's even a giveaway on the back cover, where it mentions that one of the men searching for Koko is a writer - but don't bother. It isn't really about who - it's about why. And if the ending seems incomplete, and it does, it makes sense, too. Not just from the "setting it up for another book" standpoint, either. The man who became Koko died in Ia Thuc, and there is no fair and just punishment for him that he hasn't already suffered. Still, the only thing that keeps me from giving this book 5 stars is the sense that the open-ended ending was more to lead into the next book than anything else.

Among the things that stuck with me that had nothing to do with the story itself, Beevers (in 1982 in the story and 1988 when it was written) thinks of New York as "ground zero", no caps, no foretelling, just an interesting note. The mention of D.B. Cooper was a nice touch, as are the frequent mentions of other authors and books, including Blue Rose (ISBN 0887330053 and 0146001079) copyright 1985 by Straub himself but attributed to Tim Underhill in the book. Superbly written, and worth all 595 pages!

- AnnaLovesBooks

Mike: I was a bit disappointed, as I had loved Ghost Story. It's longer than it needed to be. It's very well written, but not that well thought out? I'm not sure how to describe what I mean, but I'll try. Straub can paint a scene very well, and can fill you with suspense when it's called for, but some of the characters did a lot of things, for extended periods, that defy logic or motivation, even when their inner thoughts are revealed. It's a bit long, and the "reveal" is hard to buy in the end. Still, I kept it and dog-eared some favorite passages because they were so effective.

Maxine Marsh: 4.5*

Tee Jay: it's been stated that, "Despite the truth that it received the realm myth Award, Koko includes simply minimum nods in the direction of the fantastic, and was once no longer released as a Horror novel either. yet nevertheless, this journey de strength – this mystery approximately Vietnam veterans and a serial killer is a horror novel if we use the be aware to intend the emotion that stows aboard books of any genre, or even aboard mainstream fiction, instead of the definition of 'books with blood and guts' (<http://www.infinityplus.co.uk/nonfict...>). I a little bit agree. i'm additionally of the assumption that this novel is among the such a lot dull decisions i've got learn in fresh memory. It screamed out that Straub used to be attempting challenging to put in writing a few warfare he didn't take part or think in. i actually can't think i ended the novel; I stored hoping that it should get better, I guess—and it by no means did. As a ways as "horror" goes, the one horror I felt was once on the finish of the novel, when, with dawning horror, I got here to the conclusion that the entire adventure of analyzing Koko was once one grand workout in futility. i need my time back, I thought. Actually, i wished to erase the total re-reading adventure from my mind. the radical was once so dreadful to read, in fact, that it virtually made me are looking to by no means learn one other novel again. (Is that too harsh?) Okay, so I'm being a bit melodramatic, yet i know that it took me over 4 months to accomplish

the thing, a distinct anomaly for one of these voracious reader comparable to myself. The novel did have a couple of optimistic attributes, however. I need to credit Mr. Straub for his marvelous characterization skills: he quite did flesh out plausible characters in Koko with aplomb. There simply wasn't some extent to them, and that was once the problem. The tale simply wasn't believable and realistic. In effect, the radical used to be trapped in a void, a vacuum, with out aspect and no escape. Koko didn't pertain to something remotely worthy being concerned about, and this used to be what made the unconventional so disappointing. Within the end, I trust the Kirkus Review: "Although sharply limned, the characters stay static (and Koko an unsatisfactory shadow) till the end; the plot meanders and the twists carry no punch, leaching suspense; the overriding temper of gloom and doom drags the complete attempt down. In all, then, an honorable, effective failure".

Philip: I first learn Koko virtually two decades ago, and that I consider pondering it was once OK. Recently, our studying of Stephen King's *Desperation* triggered me to revisit Koko, simply because I presumed Julie may possibly like whatever by means of Straub. and I am pleased I revisited this e-book -- it is a far better novel than I remembered, and Julie and that I either completely loved it. Koko is a strong mental mystery approximately 4 Vietnam vets who, 15 years after the war, detect string of grisly murders in southeast Asia bears the unmistakable fingerprint of one other from their platoon who mysteriously disappeared in the course of the war. Straub is (from what I will tell) an surprisingly proficient writer; and even if his writing right here is not perfect, it really is much, far better prose (and story) than what else it's possible you'll locate at the bestseller rack. Particularly, during this case, the characters: what occurs (and what might or won't have happened) to the characters during this novel lingers with me still. Koko is the 1st novel of Straub's loosely-connected Blue Rose trilogy, via *Secret* and *The Throat*. I hugely suggest the total trilogy.

Robb: a fascinating story approximately four associates within the States who have been additionally survivors of the Vietnam War. This tale is as a lot a mental exam because it is a mystery/thriller...and I believe that is the place I bought a bit confused. It felt, ultimately, a bit schizophrenic. Nevertheless, it is a Peter Straub book, and there are few who can weave a story as deftly as he whereas nonetheless devoting good enough time and effort to precise personality development. This tale all started down a few relatively peculiar streets basically to drag again onto its overwhelmed course and that I ask yourself how a lot richer this is able to were have been the leash allowed to play out a short while longer.

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