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Koko's Kitten (Reading Rainbow Books)



Synopsis

The real life experience of Koko, a gorilla in California who uses sign language, with a young kitten whom she loved and grieved over when it died.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 610L (What's this?)

Series: Reading Rainbow Books

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Scholastic; Reissue edition (June 1, 1987)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0590444255

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Product Dimensions: 7.7 x 0.1 x 10.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (69 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #111,104 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in [Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Apes & Monkeys](#) #2115 in [Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology](#) #5632 in [Books > Children's Books > Animals](#)

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

This is the heart-warming, true-life story of a signing gorilla, Koko, and her life with researcher, Francine Patterson, and pet kitten, All Ball. The narrative contains interesting insights into gorilla mentality, emotions, and human-like qualities and abilities. Because Koko uses sign language, the story is a good one to read during Deaf Awareness Week to your elementary class or your own children. Note that the video by the same name, if available, plucks the heart-strings a little more in showing footage of Koko's interaction with her beloved Ball, grief after Ball's tragic accident, and Koko's introduction to her new kitten.

As a 2nd grade teacher, I am very concerned about my students developing empathy for animals and other humans. We have talked at length about feelings and respect for animals and people and I thought Koko would be a wonderful way to develop the discussion further. However, when I sat down to read the book for the first, second, and third times, I bawled like I have not cried in a long

time! This touching, real-life story of Koko the gorilla and her cat All Ball struck a nerve in me not only for the grief Koko experienced when her cat died, but for the realization that we are not alone on this earth - we are not unique in our ability to love, empathize, and care for one another. What makes us unique is the responsibility we have to ensure the survival and happiness of all living creatures. I have not decided if I will read this book to my class, because I am not sure I'll get through it without crying, but I think this powerful little book belongs in every school library. The lessons to be learned through Koko's experience as a caring, feeling, sentient being are valuable for readers of all ages.

I first read this book when I was in the second grade and remember it bringing tears to my eyes, but at the same time making me smile at seeing the wonderful bonds that can occur between humans and animals. I am now 16, and still read this book on a regular basis! It is a MUST for anyone considering it! Also, it is a great gift for anyone you know who is involved with PETA, the ASPCA, or any other animal lovers!

Occasionally something crosses our paths in life that causes us to pause and take notice of our own species and its capacity for empathy and understanding. What perhaps is most startling is that those moments come from something far outside ourselves. This story never fails to open us to that empathy because it is so simple, so pure and so human....despite the fact that the stimulus for all of these emotions comes from a gorilla and her need to nurture and feel connection. You will likely read Koko's Kitten more than once because it's a nurturing story and it somehow permits us to feel human in a way that is pure and non-judgmental.

I've loved this book for a long time, and have shared it with many students who have all reacted positively. It's just an endearing, well-written true story. For teachers, this narrative includes an expository article explaining that it is nonfiction and giving details of the scientist's decision to work with Koko. Interesting! (It also arrived on time, in the condition named.)

Koko's Kitten, by Dr. Francine Patterson, is about a gorilla and a kitten. It's almost Koko's birthday. Penny helps Koko she wanted to give Koko a toy cat. But it didn't come in on time. So Penny gave it to Koko on Christmas. Koko didn't like the toy cat. So Penny gave her a real cat. Koko named the kitten Ball. Ball bit Koko and Koko called Ball obnoxious but Koko never hit back. Koko treated Ball like a baby. Koko combed Ball, and put him in her thigh like what a mother will do. Koko also

painted Ball. Koko played games with Ball that Ball hated. On a cloudy day Barbara told Penny that Ball got hit by a car and he was dead. Then Penny told Koko. And Koko was sad. Ten minutes later Penny heard Koko cry. Penny cried, too. Barbara asked Koko what she wanted for Christmas then Koko signs tiger cat. Then Penny shows Koko three drawings of cats. Koko picks a tailless Manx. On March 14 Koko got a red cat. Koko named it Lipstick. Koko was happy. The theme about this book is about friendship. Koko always plays with Penny. And she always plays with Ball. Koko thought Ball was her baby so she put him in her thigh. They always played games. I like the way Koko didn't hurt Ball. By Stephanie

The story of Koko, the gorilla who knows sign language, and her kitten, Ball, is told by Penny Patterson, her owner and mentor. Koko loved books about cats, and one day, she got a little gray, tailless kitten of her own. Koko named the kitty All Ball. There are wonderful photos of Koko cuddling and playing with Ball. Looking at them, it's easy to see that humans don't have a monopoly on love. A sad part leads to a happy ending for the wonderful Koko, who is now 31 years old. This book is especially recommended for anyone learning sign language!

I have loved Koko's Kitten ever since it first came out. The book is not the best written book ever, and maybe it's just that I am an animal fanatic, but the plot and the real life story of Koko's Kitten is touching. Dr. Patterson is a researcher in real life and the fact that Koko is so human really touches us, especially me, because I am currently writing a paper on the topic of animals' emotions. One of the best parts about Koko's Kitten is that it is an enjoyable reading experience, not only for children, but for adults as well.

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