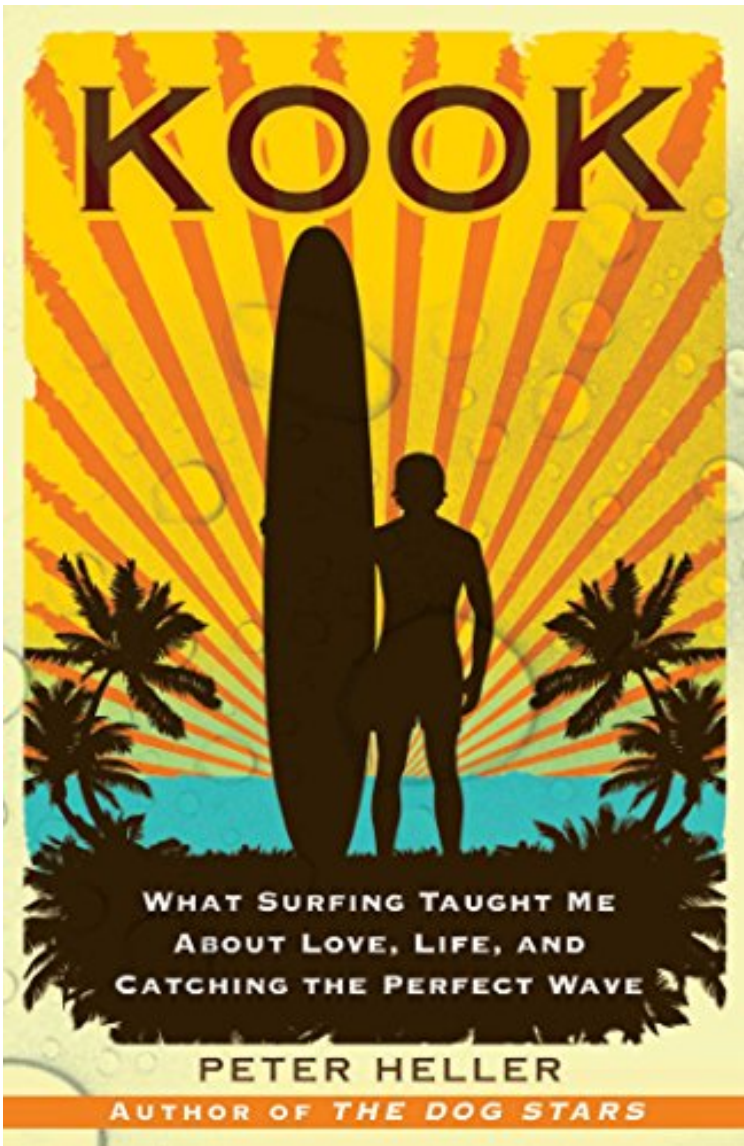


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# Kook: What Surfing Taught Me About Love, Life, and Catching the Perfect Wave (English Edition)



*Par Peter Heller*

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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAuthor of the New York Times bestselling novel The Dog Stars With grit, poetry, and humor, Peter Heller, acclaimed author of The Whale Warriors recounts his remarkable journey of discoveryof surfing, an entirely new challenge; of the oceans beauty and power; of the strange surf subculture; of love; and, most of all, of how to seek adventure while crafting a meaningful life. Having

resolved to master a big-hollow wave that is, to go from kook (surfer for beginner) to shredder in a single year, Heller travels from Southern California down the coast of Mexico in the company of his girlfriend and the eccentric surfers they meet. Exuberant and fearless, Heller explores the technique and science of surfing the secrets of its culture, and the environmental ravages to the stunning coastline he visits. As Heller plumbs the working of his own heart and finds joy in both love and surfing, he affords readers vivid insight into this fascinating world, with all of its perils and pleasures, its absurdity and wonder. Exhilarating, entertaining, and moving, *Kook* is a love story between a man and his surfboard, a man and his girlfriend, a not-so-old man and the sea. Excerpt from *WITNESS* I had watched the seal catch two waves. Now his head popped up beside me where I sat on my board. I almost fell off in surprise. Hi, I stammered. He blinked, unafraid and curious.

Oh, man, I thought, he wants to be my friend. Right? I proffered. The seal didn't seem to be into conversation. He turned his head toward the open ocean, just like a surfer looking for a set. Wow. These are the kind of moments we dream about. He had position on me. I mean that, technically, he was closer to the peak where the waves broke and so the next wave belonged to him. But no rule of surf etiquette said I had to yield to a pinniped. I'm going, I thought. Next good wave is mine. You can catch waves all day long. He turned his sleek head and looked at me with such frank and kindly condescension that I winced. What on earth are you doing in my house? he seemed to say. You are such a kook. Kook means beginner surfer. It is not a neutral term; it carries a slug of derision, a brand for the clueless, for those without hope, without grace, without rhythm. To be a kook is to be consigned to a kind of beginners hell. The seal disappeared in a swirl of green water. Good. I always messed up when someone was watching. I needed a little alone time. I sat on the board and focused on the horizon. My ocean-sharpened eyes were hunting set waves the distinctly bigger, more powerful swells that came like big fat birthday presents out of the Pacific. One was bound to have my name on it. Was that one? Way, way out? Yes! I turned the board and lay down. Ready! Surfers, people who actually knew how to surf, spun their boards just under the wave and took off. Not me. I needed

a lot of lead time. I started paddling. My wave might not get here for a while, but I'd have some momentum. The seal's head popped up, not ten feet away. Now he was about to burst with glee. Evidently he thought I was hilarious. He kept his head half turned, eyes unblinking and locked on mine as he effortlessly cruised beside me on my right. Go ahead, laugh! I thought. You won't be the first, but I'm getting this wave. I already suspected he could read my mind, so I added, Big shot. I looked once over my shoulder. Oh, man, there it was, the building wall, barreling in just behind, steepening, lifting. This was it. The wave picked up my tail and shot me forward. Yes! Okay, okay, pop up! In the split second it took to attempt the most crucial move in surfing from passenger-prone to standing and in control two thoughts flashed: Anything is possible.

And: What the hell am I doing here? 2010 Peter Heller *Revue de presse* "In this rich and gracefully written book, Heller's creative and artistic abilities are on full display. We follow along with him on an insightful, year-long quest as he grapples with the dual, ever capricious, challenges of love and the sea." National Outdoor Book Award *Breathtaking*. . . . As Heller slips deeper and deeper into the surfing world, he teeters at the edge of obsession. . . . Over the course of this journey, Heller comes to understand the power of the waves, the value of the ocean and its suffering at the hands of man. Perhaps most important, he discovers his ability to commit, to love. The *Dallas Morning News* Told with an honesty and self-deprecating sense of humor, Heller's tale is as much about surfing as it is about his personal growth as an individual once he starts getting his glide on. With a finely trained ability to both have insight and share it, Heller connects the dots between the simple act of surfing, emotional health, personal redemption, and our duty to work as stewards of Mother Earth. Next time an employer, a parent, or a significant other asks you why you surf or what the bigger meaning of so much time getting waterlogged actually adds up to, this book is the ideal answer to give them. Santa Barbara Independent The book may be about surfing, but the real subject here is obsession.

How far is one man willing to push his body, mind, and relationship to achieve a singular goal? Though Peter Heller may end up catching a wave that is perfect, the life lessons along the way are even more powerful. Mark Obmascik, author of *Halfway to Heaven* and *The Big Year* Heller is a guy you would want to go on an adventure with: likeable, fallible, good-humored, given to near-fatal bouts of love for the ocean, for his girl, for the perfect wave. What begins as a mid-life crisis evolves, in this engaged and engaging story, into a deeply impassioned stand on behalf of marine-life, and of all life. *Kook* makes the dangerously unhip suggestion that it is still possible to find meaning--even transcendence--in the ever diminishing natural world. Pam Houston, author of *Sight Hound* Heller takes us on a wild, unforgettable adventure with the poet's gift for capturing the quintessential in risking everything and the transformation that comes with it. This book is a funny, compelling exploration of love, surfing and the everyday, even when life proves as

uncompromising as the wave. Rebecca Rowe, author of *Forbidden Cargo*"The author has a great feel for people As a result, the reader gets to know a collection of fascinating characters: surf stars, expats, and environmentalists, to say nothing of the creatures of the seaMr. Hellers colorful and informative paean to humility belongs on the bookshelves of kooks and surf gods alike." --The East Hampton Star