



# Simple Simon

*William Poe*

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## **Simple Simon** William Poe

SIMPLE SIMON is a touching, thoughtful look at one man's search for family, self-acceptance, and the ability to love and be loved.

The winner of the 2016 IR Discovery Awards in LGBT fiction, Simple Simon is the story of Simon Powell, a young gay man struggling with his identity as he recovers from drug abuse.

As part of his therapy, Simon is told to write out his life story, and his feelings about his past. His reminiscences begin with his troubled childhood in rural Arkansas, where his discovery of his own homosexuality leaves him feeling rejected and irreparably separate from his family and friends. Finding solace and family in Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, he becomes a leading fundraiser and provider of spiritual guidance – but he must deny his own sexuality in order to hold on to his secure place in the church, and the resulting conflict, along with internal church conflict, leads him to lose faith. Embroiled in drug addiction and despair, can Simon ever learn to love himself as he is, and accept the love others have for him?

Simple Simon follows the novel, Simon Says (ISBN: 0615559573), which recounts Simon's success as a motion picture distributor in Hollywood at a time when Simon is haunted by the faith he surrendered in order to live as a gay man. Simon meets Thad and builds a relationship fraught with jealousies and betrayals, which they strive to overcome. Simon's decline into despair and drug use leads him into dangerous business affairs that threaten his relationship with Thad after leaving rehab. In an upcoming novel, Simon must face his past as Thad's life is put in jeopardy.

In addition to winning the 2016 IndieReader Discovery Awards in the category LGBT fiction, Simple Simon was a finalist in Clarion ForeWord Reviews 2013 Book of the Year Award Fiction Gay & Lesbian (Adult Fiction).

## **Simple Simon Details**

Date : Published September 9th 2013 by CreateSpace (first published September 8th 2013)

ISBN : 9781477624999

Author : William Poe

Format : Paperback 462 pages

Genre : Fiction, Contemporary

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## From Reader Review Simple Simon for online ebook

### Kme\_17 says

This book is about a man coming to term with his homosexuality and dealing with the fall out of his decisions. This is a well written book. I liked this one okay. I think I was not in the mood for this one. However, I can see how many people would really love this one. I really enjoyed all the detail the author shared it really set this setting for this time period. Recommend this one who is looking for interesting take on this subject. I received this one as a first read.

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### Mark Smith says

Simple Simon is a deeply motivating story aimed at the LGBTQ community. It shines a light of hope for those who've suffered at the hands of public prejudice and intolerance. Simon's story illuminates the deeper, darker psyche and what the gay community experiences on an emotional, psychological, and sociological level.

Poe weaves an intimate story, focused on one's own acceptance of who they are and coming to terms with their true nature. The story accurately captures the despair, isolation, and depression of growing up gay in a Southern state during the 1960s. I highly recommend this book for anyone who loves reading fictional accounts of real-life social issues. Poe's use of literary devices and descriptive language brings the novel to life. He's a true master of the pen.

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### Rachel Parrott says

Simple Simon follows the life of a boy growing up in small town Arkansas in the 60s dealing with questions of identity and sexuality in a messy life. Life leads him through hippie culture, followers of Rev Moon, drugs and more. While I appreciated glimpses into movements within our nations history, I found that a never really felt for any of the charaters.

Simple Simon as a Goodreads First Reads prize.

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### William Poe says

Simple Simon won in the LGBT Fiction category for the 2016 IndieReader Discovery Awards!

Judge, 22nd Annual Writer's Digest Self-Published Book Awards.

Though a work of fiction, the autobiographical SIMPLE SIMON by William Poe is an honest, wrenching look at what it means to try to cope in a world where you are misunderstood. As a result, its triumphant ending is all the more satisfying to the reader. The cover, with its pastel palette and thoughtful boy, catches the eye. The back cover copy tells the reader exactly what is inside yet is enlightening and enchanting enough that the prospective reader will want to delve in immediately. I was interested in the book because it

is a basic human story of a person trying to fit into what society wants when that society is telling him not to be himself. I think lots of people face this from time to time, whether straight or gay. When I opened the book, I was immediately drawn into the story. It's a world I didn't know anything about, and the author is a terrific guide. He made me see his side of the story and feel his emotions. I think the author sets out to encourage others in his situation, and in similar situations, and I believe with this book, he succeeds. I think anyone reading SIMPLE SIMON will learn much, and will find the time well spent. Nice work.

Simple Simon is a finalist for the Clarion ForeWord Reviews Book of the Year Award, Gay & Lesbian (Adult Fiction)

<https://botya.forewordreviews.com/fin...>

<https://www.forewordreviews.com/revie...>

Simple Simon

Clarion Review

The author's clear and compassionate voice invites readers inside Simon's head as he hurts and heals.

Simple Simon, by William Poe, follows Simon Powell through a gritty, painful path and ultimately becomes a story of healing. At his counselor's urging, Simon is earnestly trying to make sense of his life by writing down his story. Poe is able to keep the first-person, confessional urgency of the story without falling into the rambling, self-indulgent, journal-like style of similar stories.

Simon grew up in the 1960s in Arkansas, where he faced adversity because of his homosexuality. This pain and tension sets the stage for the rest of his life. He seeks solace in Reverend Moon's Unification Church, through drug and alcohol abuse, and through unhealthy relationships. Eventually one of his relationships heads him in a positive direction—Thad, Simon's former lover, encourages Simon to seek treatment for his drug addiction. The counsel and healing that result are the impetus for this story.

While Simon's susceptibility to and involvement in Moon's cult are interesting and indicative of the vulnerability and loneliness he feels, it's the loving and flawed relationships in his life that will be more deeply felt by readers. Simon's childhood remembrances of running to meet his mother's car and playing Old Maid with his grandmother provide a touching background for the pain, conflict, and isolation in Simon's family. When his mother, late in her life, accepts his sexual identity, readers feel a warmth slowly begin to fill the chasm that had developed between them.

Poe's background in art and anthropology shine through in the delicacy and compassion he shows to his characters. Poe's clear, open voice draws readers in. Descriptions are well balanced, giving readers a clear understanding of events without bogging down the story with detail, and dialogue is realistic and easy to read.

The book provides readers with a hopeful, happier counterpart to Poe's other novel, Simon Says. As a result, the cover image is light, airy, and inviting, and the title type complements it well. Readers who rely on the cover to set the tone and skip the back cover copy may be taken aback by the harsh realities the book portrays on the path to healing.

The novel will appeal most to gay people like Simon who've journeyed through bigotry and pain to develop positive outlooks and relationships. That said, Simple Simon's message of reconciliation and hope is truly for anyone who has struggled to resolve the truth they know about themselves with the way others see them. The power of forgiveness and acceptance can resonate with all readers.

Melissa Wuske

July 29, 2013

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-re...>

#### KIRKUS REVIEW

Growing up is tough on Poe's (Simon Says, 2012) titular protagonist in this thoughtful, gritty tale. Simon Powell grew up gay, smart and constantly searching for fulfillment in the rural South in the 1960s and '70s. As the novel opens, Simon is writing down his personal story while staying at a rehab facility and trying to work through his problems—which are, as he would say, “legion.” The word “journey” is often overused, but it absolutely applies to Simon's experiences, starting with his first sexual encounters with his best friend. Later, after high school, he fights to establish his own identity in a world full of new ideas, drugs and quasi-religions; soon, he comes under the influence of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his Unification Church members before an inevitable disillusionment. Simon's search for himself leads him into esoteric areas of philosophy, music, art and drugs; along the way, his musings are peppered with big names, from musician Jimi Hendrix to artist Willem de Kooning to psychic Edgar Cayce. Later, in rehab, he engagingly fights both his addiction and his emotional detachment as his lover and mother look on. At times, the book dwells a bit too long on philosophical discussion, to the point where the characters seem like mere place holders to make conversational points. But even during these occasional narrative speed bumps, Simon remains an extremely compelling character, and readers will find themselves invested in Simon's fate. He may be self-destructive, but he's always trying to adhere to a moral compass—although one that's been badly damaged by his life experiences. It's an engaging story throughout, and it's rarely obvious where Simon will wind up.

A sweeping, unpredictable fictional autobiography.

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#### June says

I originally bought this book because I knew the author wrote about the Moonie cult which I was very familiar with from my past. I joined at the same age and around the same time as "Simon," so I recognized immediately that William Poe wrote accurately of the general church experience. Though I was never more than a flower seller, I believed every action in response to Moon's directives was going to help save the world.

William Poe is an excellent writer and his characters became very real to me. As I got to know Simon and his friends and family in this amazing novel, I realized I'd never considered how difficult it was for our gay and lesbian friends to live the life Moon "preached" we should live.

I think everyone, gay or straight, should read this novel in order to get a better perspective on ourselves and others. How much do we compromise our beliefs and feelings in order to be accepted in this or any world we live in?

If I was an English lit teacher, "Simple Simon" would be required reading. I know the discussions would be endless and fascinating.

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## **Ron Capshaw says**

Poe's tale of a damaged gay man struggling with issues of sexuality and faith, and the coping mechanisms of drugs and alcohol has a universal appeal. Those secure in their sexuality, and even those who are straight will find this work compelling. Poe creates such a sympathetic underdog that audiences of all persuasions will root for him.

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## **Julie says**

I read 'Simple Simon' in two nights. I found it to be a well written book that was very easy to follow. I also thought the story was engaging. That said, I could not relate to a single character in the book. I wanted to feel sympathy for the main character but could not. In fact, I had trouble mustering up emotion for any of them. With such strong writing, I was able to effortlessly get through the book. I think it will hold great appeal to a select group of the population. \*Won from GoodReads First Reads.

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## **Katherine Parsons says**

Simple Simon is utterly brilliant. It is immediately clear why this won the IR Discovery Awards, and for anyone who is perhaps put off by the LGBT themes because it seems irrelevant to you, I would urge you to read it regardless. The sexuality of the protagonist is in no way the most interesting thing about the book. Whatever the identity of the reader, I guarantee it will speak into every life with as much resonance and relevance to all.

This book is both troubling and invigorating, sparking sympathy, shock, and immense joy in turns. There is nothing predictable about this story - it is wonderfully original from beginning to end. It will doubtlessly be on my mind for days and weeks to come, and I look forward to reading the sequel.

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## **Chaundra says**

This book is about a man, coming to terms with self loathing for himself, while in rehab. He had searched for love and acceptance from his father, friendship, drugs, and a cult known as The Moonies.

I thought the Loonies were a fascinating group. And I enjoyed learning about them. I thought that telling the story through a journal, the main character was keeping, during his stint in rehab, was creative. The writing flowed and held my interest.

I didn't like the main character. He played the victim, and he was just altogether an unsympathetic character to me. I thought the sex "scenes" were too graphic for most straight folks, and I had to skim over some of those parts. I also thought the ending was too abrupt and left me feeling sort of empty.

I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys fiction that reads like a memoir, or to anyone that is interested in learning about religious cults. However, I'm not sure how accurate the information was. Do not read this book if you are easily offended by homosexual content in a book.

