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“Simpleman” wins the 2025 Reader Views Grand Prize Silver Award in Fiction

This gay psychological thriller by Michael Scott Curnes earns one of the top prizes in the Annual Reader Views Literary Awards program.

March 1, 2026 - Austin, TX -- Reader Views announces **Simpleman** by Michael Scott Curnes as one of the overall grand prize winners in fiction. Curnes’s novel takes home the silver award, an award honored with a cash prize and special marketing promotions.

Simpleman is a gay psychological noir thriller that opens in 2025 and unfolds in reverse, tracing the tangled history of the Simpleman family as buried secrets start resurfacing. Ronald Simpleman, a self-exiled recluse on family acreage outside Crested Butte, believes he may be facing his final winter—and his last chance to clean up the evidence of a lifetime shaped by inherited damage, fear, and guilt. As the story rewinds decade by decade, the novel tightens around the fallout of Ronald’s hidden past, the volatile ties between brothers Ronald and Harlan, and Mitch, a younger writer whose rising profile raises the threat of exposure. Darkly funny and razor-edged, it builds suspense around what can be kept quiet, what can’t, and what it costs when the past refuses to stay buried.

Paul Knobloch with Reader Views says of the story, “When you’re dealing with darkness, you need a little levity, and this book certainly does deliver. But what most pleases me about *Simpleman* is that we are at a point now where we can write strong, complex queer characters in ways that are not didactic, preachy, or watered down... Curnes knows how to write, and he is careful to fill in just enough space to keep the reader interested and get them to the big reveal, the ending.”

Curnes credits the Albert Camus adage—“Fiction is the lie through which we tell the truth”—as the central tenet behind his storytelling and readily admits that *Simpleman* lurks just outside the bounds of autobiography.

Simpleman also earned the 2025 Reader Views Gold Award for LGBTQIA+ Fiction and was selected as winner of the 2025 Reader Views Canada West Regional Award.

Simpleman [ISBN: 978-1998844043, Down Wind Press (2025)] is available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) and at online and retail bookstores everywhere.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Scott Curnes is a multi-award-winning Canadian novelist living in Victoria, British Columbia, CANADA. He is a member of [The Writers' Union of Canada](#). Born in Coeur d'Alene and raised in Idaho and Montana, Curnes attended the universities of Idaho and New Mexico. In 1994 his career took him to Vancouver Island where he eventually became a fully-fledged Canadian Citizen on Valentine's Day, 2000. He has written eleven novels, six of which have been published. Learn more and connect with Michael Scott Curnes at <https://www.michaelscottcurnes.com/>

ABOUT THE AWARDS PROGRAM

Founded in 2005, the **Reader Views Literary Awards** honor excellence in independent publishing. Our program recognizes authors who self-publish or publish through small presses, hybrids, or university presses. Today, the awards operate in two seasonal tracks for Fiction and Non-Fiction, spotlighting impactful indie books across all genres and topics, and celebrating both new and established voices within the literary community. Top honors include cash prizes totaling \$3,000. Learn more at <http://www.readerviews.com/>.