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## Pacific Book Review

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**Title:** Simply Amazing – Special Author’s Edition

**Author:** K. C. Armstrong

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**Reviewed by:** Barbara Bamberger Scott

**Pacific Book Review Star**

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A man who has seen life from the top to the bottom interviews heroic people who have, like him, survived life’s storms and seeks to inspire others by recounting their experiences.

Author K. C. Armstrong gained reflected fame as a cast member for the widely broadcasted, often controversial Howard Stern Show. Fired, without apparent acrimony, Armstrong fell into a morass of self-destructive behavior induced by his alcoholism, which he describes in stark detail in the introduction to this collection. Finally forced to stop drinking or die, he began to rebuild his life and started his own internet/FM radio station, WMAP (World's Most Amazing People). *Simply Amazing* comprises a dozen gently edited interview transcriptions. The subjects of these talks with Armstrong are not the most well known names, nor are they people who always had it easy in achieving their life goals. On the contrary, they are people who did not expect to succeed, who were abused, poor, and in one case, literally tortured, yet managed to rise above circumstance to live exemplary lives.

The opening interviewee is Werner Reich, a Jew who survived the worst torments of Nazi Germany including internment in Auschwitz; Werner's advice, by which he has tried to live his life, is "be nice." Tom Butts rose from obscurity to become the owner of a large equipment rental company, realizing that his willingness to work and his positive treatment of his employees were essential keys to business success. Author and speaker Jenny Maher, wheelchair-bound victim of child abuse, and has garnered a following through her belief in perseverance. Doug Herald was a poor farm boy whose spiritual outlook resulted in a "business ministry." Jeanne Beard, parent of an autistic child, enheartens others through her self-created National Autism Academy. Lito Mason grew up in the projects; his father was beaten to death by police; yet Lito now dedicates himself to "climbing little mountains" in a give-back project dedicated to helping inner city kids. Artist and performer Laurene Hope overcame mental illness and strives to help others with her project, Moving On TV. Dr Elizabeth Rodger courageously founded an emergency clinic for animals in Alaska. Cancer survivor Daniella Cipitelli was determined to "be a messenger" for other sufferers. Another cancer victim, Shannon Knight, encourages people to seek treatments, however unconventional, that work best for them. Peter Gantner whose business life began as a child selling tomatoes by the roadside, started Kula Brands, a business conglomerate assisting individual inventors and entrepreneurs to work together for a common cause.

One highly emotive encounter is Armstrong's talk with his mother, Virginia, who went to Africa to teach children and had a life-changing (and almost life-ending) experience climbing Mt Kilimanjaro. In this as in all the interview scenarios, K. C. makes himself a part of the story by evincing empathy, encouragement and admiration towards those with whom he is communicating.

Readers who thrive on spiritually inspirational, hard-scrabble, tough as nails success sagas, especially those featuring people "just like me," will cherish Armstrong's collection and hope for further volumes.