



Chop Shop

Andrew Post

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In Andrew Post's thrilling and unsettling novel *Chop Shop*, characters are sent into a churning mass of violence and gore.

Ex-con Frank Goode returns to his medical roots, operating out of his kitchen for various criminal elements. When Simone Pescatelli—the niece of a Mafia boss—shows up for a late-term abortion, she drags Frank deeper into the black. Simone winds up murdering Frank's latest patient, who is also her family's rival, and Frank turns to a local funeral home for help.

The funeral home is run by two girls who are struggling to keep the place afloat. Thanks to Frank, the girls are swept up in the so-called "red market," selling body parts; Frank finds himself targeted by both sides for Simone's actions. The book becomes a well-orchestrated dark comedy brimming with violence.

Frank anchors the story as a tragic hero with surprising depth. Though disgraced, he values life and just wants to work and take care of his family. His every decision stems from his desire to heal and protect others—even if doing so requires him to kill and maim. It's a fascinating dichotomy that keeps the story on track.

Conversations are distinctive and layer in details. Scenes—such as a massive shoot-out in Frank's house or a character's desperate self-mutilation—compete with each other for the most visceral descriptions.

Even as the perspective shifts between the three major characters, the pace stays pulse-pounding; there's rarely any downtime. The conclusion somehow feels both surprising and expected, thanks to Post's strong foreshadowing and deft characterization.

Chop Shop is a wild blend of pulp fiction with dark comedy; its engrossing plot always seems just about to spin out of control.

JOHN M. MURRAY (May/June 2019)

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