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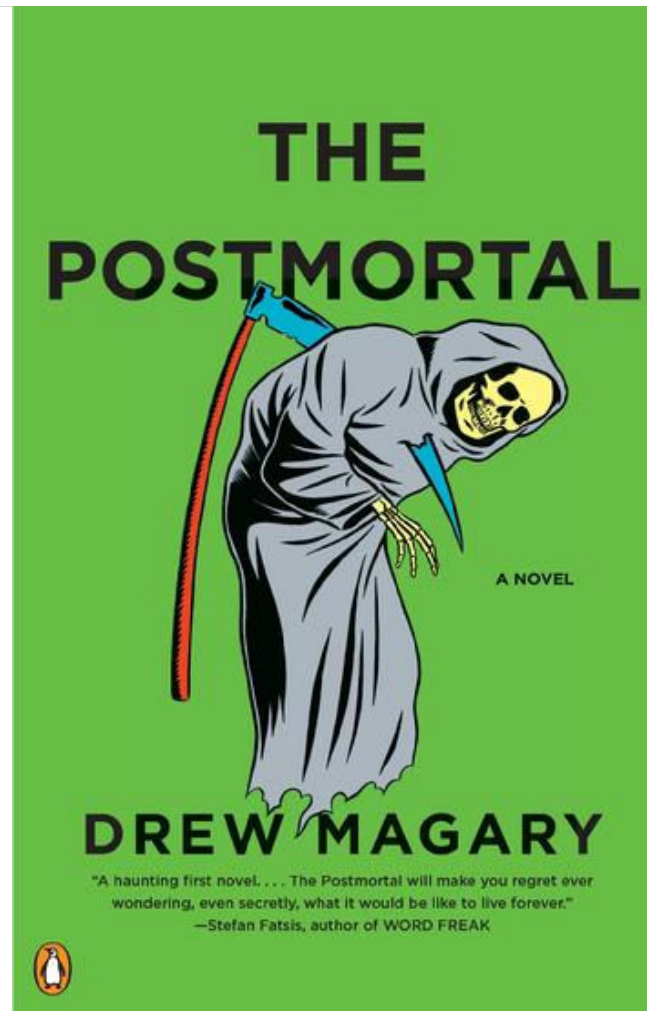
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# ***The Write Place At the Write Time Book Review- Hot off the Presses***



Cover Image of The Postmortal by Drew Magary

**The Write Place At the Write Time Book Review  
Presents: *The Postmortal* by Drew Magary**

Author bio: Drew Magary writes for Deadspin, NBC, *Maxim*, and Kissing Suzy Kolber—a humor site dedicated to the NFL. He has also contributed to *Rolling Stone*, Comedy Central, *New York Magazine*, *GQ*, ESPN, Yahoo!, *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and various

other media outlets. *The Postmortal*, now out from Penguin, is his first novel.

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### **Review by Nicole M. Bouchard~**

What is at once the book's most entertaining and most horrifying attribute, is its believability. This is not generally the type of book I'm drawn to- thus it means more when I say that it is an important book of the modern age, a 'should' for every bookshelf, a 'must' for those who choose to tune into and be consciously aware of what's going on the world; this is a fiction novel with a science fiction premise but it misses no mark when it comes to hitting upon the socio-economic trends and human vulnerabilities that have us spiraling into an uncertain future. It also speaks of hope and inherent goodness, compassion. You will not see the world in the same light once you have lingered in the space of these pages- for better or for worse. Drew Magary's candid, debut novel is a thrilling evolution that points out everything we don't want to see, brought to light and degrees of extreme in his parallel fictional world that had discovered a cure for aging and with it, all of the imaginable consequences.

Using the 'LifeRecorder app', protagonist John Farrell leaves behind a legacy of the 'Cure' age and his work as an 'end specialist' that the Department of Containment discovers over a decade after his death when the cure is no longer legalized and the world is recovering from its near self-destruction. Beginning in 2019, you watch Farrell's life as an attorney, as a lover and friend who decides to get the cure for aging. It isn't far-fetched to imagine this being a sensible choice for someone who has seen what can age do to sharp minds and able bodies. The cure does not make one immune to disease or the will of his fellow man. However, if no illness, accident or violence occurs, the individual could potentially live thousands of years, forever. We see the shift from the cure being illegally distributed to the terrorist acts

against it, its legalization and the extremists on either side that form an impossible gap as the consequences begin to appear on the larger scales of environmental resources and rogue military units to the personal scales of 'cycle marriages'- where a person marries for a pre-determined amount of time, raises children and then dissolves all assets along with the marriage and moves on to someone new. The need for end specialists develops and people are given tax incentives by the government for essentially having someone help them commit suicide. The book spirals downward into nightmarish circles with an eerie natural momentum. No aliens, robots or strange creatures have to appear to frighten the very core of the reader- the story simply feels for weaknesses in society, tugs at the threads and lets humanity unravel itself.

It turns up the heat of oppression and rebellion as the most basic desperation is heard around the world in answer to man's contemplation of how long a life should be. "I looked out my window just now and saw a man running down the middle of the avenue, screaming his head off as cars threatened to sideswipe him from both directions. He wasn't saying anything. He was just unleashing the most primal noise he could possibly make. And he was holding up a sign that said GIVE IT TO US NOW." The fight goes from trying to get the cure to stemming the consequences of it and protecting those who have chosen it. Infants are tattooed with their real birth dates, whole families disappear and sinister "Greenies" use unthinkable violence to spread their anti-cure agenda, even waiting by cure hotels in Vegas to blind recipients so they'd have to live forever in agony. Crowds invade every aspect of life and it isn't long before there are wide-spread outbreaks of disease. There is a constant question of whether it's survival of the fittest or whether, in the darkest hour, humanity will reach out to their fellow man.

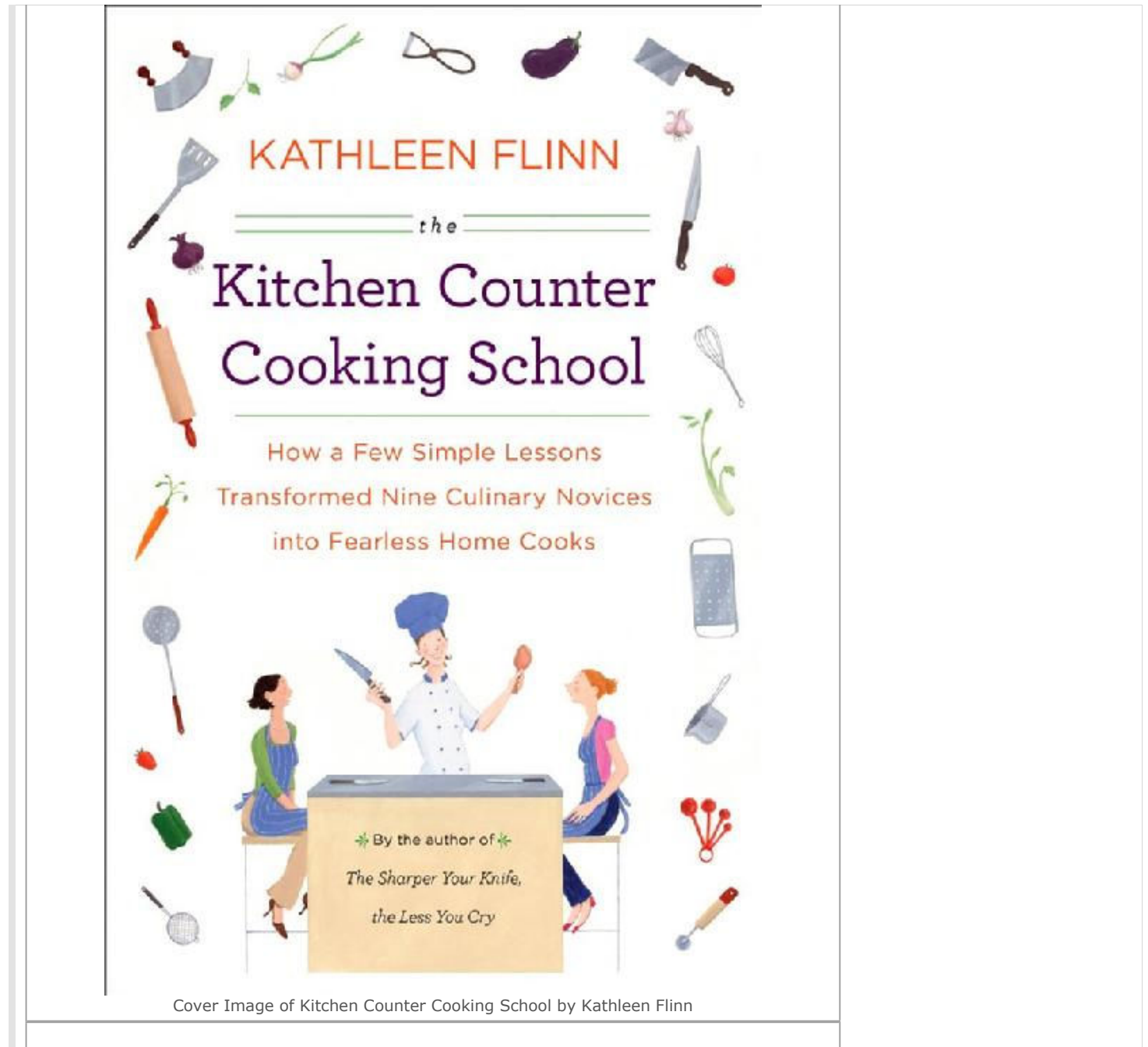
An unvarnished look at the minds and hearts of who we are when we are pushed to the outer limits, *The Postmortal* leaves no stone unturned. There is no environmental, political or social issue left untouched. A startling, ambitious debut, Magary does this novel

justice. John Farrell has the restrained, distanced perspective that the story needs to explore the emotional spheres of the incomprehensible. Even his short-comings and emotional immaturity strike the perfect balance. I've recommended this book to readers and non-readers alike but caution that it is one of the most terrifying, intense novels of the decade- and primarily because it seems so plausible.

### *Excerpt from The Postmortal*



[Excerpt from The Postmortal](#)



Cover Image of Kitchen Counter Cooking School by Kathleen Flinn

**The Write Place At the Write Time Book Review Presents:  
*The Kitchen Counter Cooking School* by Kathleen Flinn**

Author bio: Kathleen Flinn is the author of *The Sharper Your Knife, the Less You Cry*, (Viking/Penguin 2007) a non-fiction story of leaving corporate life to follow her dream and study at the Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. Flinn also serves on the board of directors for the International Association of Culinary Professionals. *The Kitchen Counter Cooking School* is her second book.

**Review by Denise Bouchard~**

I interviewed Kathleen Flinn for her book, *The Sharper Your Knife, The Less You Cry*, in which we followed her in fulfilling her dream of attending Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. It was an extraordinary journey of life, love and learning in the city of light. In her latest book, *The Kitchen Counter Cooking School*, we discover what she is doing with her well-earned culinary degree. Asked to give a graduation speech at the famed cooking school, she did so with the unexpected result of having an existential crisis. "What was I doing here? What words of wisdom could I possibly offer when I wasn't sure what to do next with my own life?" Though Flinn felt that "you can go anywhere and do anything with that degree" and "that you're only limited by your passion and your imagination", she hadn't really found her own niche yet.

This would come soon after. Her philosophy was you're never given your dream assignment, you have to create it. Flinn would often notice while grocery shopping, how people had carts overflowing with boxes of canned or over-processed, nutrient-deficient food, some of which tasted no better than the boxes in which they came. On one particularly serendipitous occasion, it got the best of her. Upon seeing over two dozen haphazardly piled boxes of dehydrated mixes and frozen dinners in a cart with no real food, she actually followed the woman until she found an

opening in which she could speak to her about the ways she could both save money and eat more nutritiously. This encounter set the wheels turning. It hit Flinn in that moment that "...after a year of deboning chickens and stuffing meats with other meats at my famous cooking school I had the information this woman needed."

What Flinn then realized many women lacked in the kitchen was confidence. While still promoting her first book, she was given the opportunity to speak on a long-running radio show. Here she spoke of what she'd seen on her forays into the world of grocery shopping. "Decades of savvy marketing conspired to make the woman I met at the supermarket believe that a simple cream sauce fell outside of her abilities." When she got home from the show, she actually found twenty-four messages waiting for her in her email inbox with more streaming in, in the days to follow. She discovered that the conversation on the air had touched a nerve. She glimpsed in these women guilt, embarrassment and downright melancholy. Around this time she stumbled upon the fashion television show, *What Not to Wear* with Clinton and Kelly who transformed frumpy, ordinary housewives into confident, smartly turned out women. At the end of the show they would often say things like, "You just gave me a push, the confidence I needed to make the changes I knew I should make for myself." An idea was born- Flinn had found her niche in the culinary world.

She decided that she would go into the kitchens of real, everyday women to learn what and how they cooked. It wasn't pretty. With all the food they had on the shelves, these women and their families weren't really being nourished. She then rented out an industrial kitchen and taught them everything from how to properly chop vegetables, make stock from using the whole chicken, how to shop, how to spice and most of all how to make it all taste good.

For a veteran cook who had both a French mother and



grandmother, one might think I wouldn't need this; but there are gifts in this book for everyone. For myself, I've always wanted the Olive Garden recipe for their fettuccine alfredo and there it was- the perfect cream sauce. Much beyond that, though, there's a deep vein of love that runs through the book- of Flinn providing women with the secrets to nurture themselves and their families and it was beautiful to see these women find their confidence in the kitchen. I can't give everything away but like I've said, there are gifts for everyone to be found here including great recipe favorites that you'll use forever.

In teaching, Flinn says, "You find lessons you never expected beyond the ones you taught." Like Julia Child, she writes, she cooks, she teaches. One of my favorite quotes from the book is near the end: "As I sat on the plane back to Seattle, I thought about the power of cooking- to nourish, to comfort and to heal."

*Assistant Editor's Note: To give an example of how food restores us, recently my mother passed away and everyone flew in from all over the US and we spent time together at the end the services; we all broke bread, food being the catalyst that brought us together. The misunderstandings put aside, we were restored on such a deep level, the food nourishing our exhausted bodies as we talked and reminisced, laughter beginning to fill the room. Suddenly we all felt lighter. We were restoring our souls and that's just the way my mother would've wanted it.*

## ***Excerpt from The Kitchen Counter Cooking School***



[Excerpt from The Kitchen Counter Cooking School](#)

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