

The Force

Don Winslow

After more than a dozen acclaimed, under-the-radar novels, Winslow moved into the first rank of American thriller writers with his drug-war odyssey *The Cartel*. His latest offers a similarly epic take on the cop novel, though it lacks its predecessor's singular brilliance. Denny Malone, a veteran NYPD detective sergeant, stalks the streets of Upper Manhattan, knowing nothing happens or gets dealt without his knowledge or consent. The higher-ups have given his elite team, "Da Force," free rein to keep the peace, even if rules are bent and spoils pocketed along the way. In a city where someone's going to profit off the drugs and the violence, why shouldn't it be his team? Malone prides himself on loyalty and tradition, but after a multimillion-dollar heroin bust gets the attention of the feds, he's forced to make an unthinkable decision: to turn on his brother cops and rat on his beloved teammates. **VERDICT** Winslow's writing, with its torrents of profane, single-sentence paragraphs, is as potent as ever, but his story's trajectory is familiar, particularly for fans of the show *The Shield*. Despite those reservations, this propulsive novel should be eagerly welcomed by readers of Ken Bruen.

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