

Pound for Pound

by F.X. Toole

REVIEWED BY NATALIE DANFORD

FICTION

The author of the stories that inspired the film *Million Dollar Baby*, Toole didn't live to see publication of this gripping novel, edited after his death. The narrative switches between crusty former boxer Dan Cooley and up-and-comer Eduardo "Chicky" Garza y Duffy. In scenes set in boxing rings and gyms, the two wend toward each other. At the start, Chicky is training with his grandfather, a one-time pro with a drug problem. Dan runs an auto body shop and is getting over the deaths of several relatives. The tough-guys-with-hearts theme gets hit a little hard, but the gritty dialogue and moral dilemmas satisfy. Toole's children report that his last words were, "Doc, get me just a little more time, I gotta finish my book." He can rest easy—the task has been ached. ★★☆☆

