



## **The Few**

*Nadia Dalbuono*

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Detective Leone Scamarcio, the son of a former leading Mafioso, has turned his back on the family business, and has joined the Rome police force. He may be one of the last honest men in Italy.

But when Scamarcio is handed a file of extremely compromising photographs of high-ranking Italian government officials, and told to 'deal with it', he knows he's in for trouble. And when a young man is found stabbed in his apartment in Rome and a little girl disappears on a beach in Elba, Scamarcio's job gets a whole lot more complicated.

Worst of all, every lead seems to implicate the prime minister — a multi-media baron, and the most powerful man in Italy.

As the case spins out of control, and his own past catches up with him, Scamarcio must navigate the darkest currents of Italian society — only to find that nothing is as it seems, and that the price of truth may be higher than he can pay.

## **The Few Details**

Date : Published November 6th 2014 by Scribe UK (first published August 27th 2014)

ISBN : 9781922247674

Author : Nadia Dalbuono

Format : Paperback 368 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Cultural, Italy

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## **From Reader Review The Few for online ebook**

### **Paul says**

The Few – An Excellent Debut

The Few is the debut crime thriller from Nadia Dalbuono who through her love of the genre as a reader and TV viewer has written an excellent thriller. This is a confident well written crime thriller that hits all the favourite clichés of being a page turner, leaving you on the edge of the seat all the way through the thriller. With a complex plot as in this book it would be easy to get lost and confused but instead everything ties together and this seems like the beginning of a Detective Leone Scamarcio series which would be very welcome.

Scamarcio the son of a mob boss has gone against everything his family has done in the past and joined the police dealt with by suspicion by his colleagues he is gaining a reputation in the Fly Squad of being a lone maverick that delivers. When the Chief of Police, Garramone, summons him and tells him he is investigating a delicate matter that involves the Foreign Minister, the Prime Minister and rent boys.

Trying to investigate the case without getting in the way of his colleagues starts to get harder, especially when one gets shot. He then receives a tip off that tells him he needs to go to Elba and help in the search of a young American girl and in doing so his investigation gets a whole lot more complicated.

The further he digs the more organised crime and politicians seem to be at every turn as he learns that there seems to be a dark heart in the midst of the corrupt Italian political system that is interfering and at times blocking his investigation. At times he wonders if he can really handle the investigation and if the truth really could be a too higher price to pay.

This thriller touches all dark elements of Italian society corruption and conspiracy mixed with child sexual exploitation; it really could not get any darker. We are able to see that Detective Leone Scamarcio is a complex yet dynamic investigator aware that his own background can be a hindrance but not afraid to use those contacts to further his investigation. Not the conventional type of detective as he enjoys smoking cannabis for relaxation.

I really do hope that this is the first of many thrillers that we encounter Leone Scamarcio to see him being developed further along with his complex life. Can he really cope being the son of a dead mob boss in the police? Only time will tell.

A brilliant debut thriller that is complex stunning and breath taking which really asks the question you want the truth? Cannot handle the truth!

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### **Rob Kitchin says**

Set in the city of Rome and the island of Elba, Nadia Dalbuono's debut novel mixes police procedural with political thriller. The central character is Leone Scamarcio, a loner who is an outsider within the police force given his family's mafia connections, who also has a mild anger management problem being unafraid to let

his boss know exactly what he thinks of a poor decision or action. The plot involves Scamarcio covertly investigating a sexual scandal involving a senior politician that has become a murder case. The start of the story felt a little clunky, both in terms of its plotting and telling, but becomes more assured as it progresses, especially when the tale moves to Elba. Here, there is more of a sense of place and better framing and contextualisation. However, on return to Rome it becomes a little fanciful again and the twist in the resolution felt weak and unlikely. Nevertheless, Scamarcio is an appealing character and the story rattles along, hooking the reader in, and there is plenty of intrigue and tension. Overall, an entertaining read that shows promise as the start of a new series.

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### **Paulinlong says**

I thought the first couple of pages were awful, very overwritten and self conscious, however, this was a book club read so I persevered and enjoyed the book more and more as it progressed. Parts 2 and 3 were so much better and could practically have stood alone. What the book needed was more rigorous editing, every writer needs a critical partner, there were even errors in places which had got through like a character being given the protagonist's name by mistake, how did that get through? It is easy for a writer to miss such things but surely not the editor!

I was interested in the Italian setting and enjoyed that, I thought the plotting was good; I liked Scamarcio's struggle to overcome his past and the irony of him having to use it in several different ways to get a form of justice. The corruption in Italy makes the political greed and power wielding of the London political and business elite seem half-hearted, although perhaps they're just better at dissimulation.

In the end I found myself intrigued and enjoying it despite Scamarcio's constant stomach ache and exhaustion, which made me want him to man-up, he wasn't half as hard worked as poor Aurelia who had to put up with being sidelined, cheated on and having to spend all her time on her feet dissecting bodies while he napped on trains and mused over whether to bother with her. Whoever chose the cover needs a cut of the takings, it will certainly sell some books, it is very effective.

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### **Katja | Cherryblossomreads says**

This was a very disturbing story. Although it was at times quite confusing, it was also quite the page-turner! Dalbuono has managed to write passages that glide smoothly into the next for a very easy read. It is, however, a crime novel, so there are still passages where you should watch your step!

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### **Andrew says**

Thank you to Goodreads giveaways, for the chance to read this book.

The opening of this story is set in Rome: After only a few chapters I was fully drawn in to this book. The scene has been set for an intriguing story. Detective Leone Scamarcio has been handed a file by his boss, Garramone, it involves the death of Arthur, a young rentboy. It soon becomes clear that there is a link to a senior politician, Ganza.

He has suddenly been given leave from his political job; why?

The Prime Minister seems to be involved; why?

For Scamarcio for some reason, this is all happening outside the remit of his normal police job; why?

Many chapters in part one begin with a short vignette, which it becomes apparent, are providing clues to some of the complex background links which some of the central characters have with Mafioso families. I like the way these help to show that this is going to develop into a complex story.

The setting moves to the island of Elba. Where the story becomes complicated by; missing children; a convicted criminal called 'the Priest' and conflict between Scamarcio and some of his fellow investigators. Then there is a twist towards the drugs scene.

All the way through there is the sense that is something lurking in past of Detective Scamarcio, or someone in his family. This helps to develop a real feeling of tension in the way his investigation is developing. For me this is a huge strength of this novel.

Another plus point for me is that I found I was warming to the central characters, whilst at the same time wondering what lay around the next corner in the story. By the start of part three, there are a lot of loose ends which need to be tied. I was feeling that it really was not clear who was really controlling, leading Scamarcio. In order to avoid any spoilers, I will not add any more. Other than to say that several of the loose ends are not tied until the very end of the book.

I look forward to future books by Nadia Dalbuono.

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## **RhymneyLibrary says**

In March of 2016 the 'Reading Group' at Rhymney Library reviewed 'The Few' by Nadia Dalbuono. This is what they thought:

"I really enjoyed reading the book. It was very thought provoking. It's certainly a book that I would read again as I believe you would find different views of the storyline with new, repeated, readings."

"Not a book I would have chosen personally. I have, however, enjoyed reading it! It had several parts of interest and dealt with a subject difficult not to turn into a 'circus'. The book had layers and depth of characterisations, strong plots, and was very enjoyable. It made me think. I would like to know what actually happened previously. I read this author's work again. In short, it was a good read. I WILL recommend it to friends."

"I enjoyed the book! It was a good read! It was well paced meaning it was difficult to put down. I will be recommending it!"

"It was an easy book to read. Moving along easily, proud with clues. I found it difficult to put down because the chapters were short and I wanted to find out what happened!!! I like the style. I look forward to another by this author!"

We also did a chart to see what words we associated with the book after reading. The suggestions were:

FAST PACED - STRONG PLOT - INTRIGUING - LAYERED - INVITES RE-READING - ENJOYABLE  
- THOUGHT PROVOKING - HAS A SHADOW ON THE COVER - ACCESSIBLE - SUSPENSEFUL -  
SUCCINCT - A SURPRISE TREAT!

If you would like to join us to take part in our great free reading group it runs on the first Thursday of the month from 10.30 at Rhymney Library, Victoria Road, Np22 5NU - 01685 84606

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## **Raven says**

This is the intriguing debut from an author who is originally from the UK but now lives in Italy, where *The Few* is set. The story focuses on Detective Leone Scamarcio, the son of a once powerful mafia figure. Scamarcio has turned his back on the family business and is on the Rome police force. He is handed a file containing compromising photographs of the Italian foreign secretary Giorgio Ganza with male prostitutes.

Scamarcio's boss Garramone is a confidante of the country's prime minister, and sends him to deal with the possible fallout, including the suspicious deaths of Ganza's companions. As his investigation begins, a young American girl is spirited away from her parents on the beach in Elba, and Scamarcio finds himself drawn into her disappearance and possible links to his primary case. It turns out he has to call on his family's mafia connections to navigate his way into the darkest currents of Italian society to uncover corruption and conspiracy.

Nicely sitting alongside the ranks of Donna Leon, Michael Dibdin and Tobias Jones, Nadia Dalbuono has crafted an engaging thriller with a fascinating and likeable police protagonist. Scamarcio is a multi-layered man, who on more than one occasion fulfils others' perception of him as a brilliant maverick. He is a composite of dedicated detective counterbalanced with the strong roots of his family in the 'Ndrangheta mafia, and is not shy of using his former connections to get to the bottom of this sordid case. He is persistent, clear-thinking (despite his occasional use of marijuana), and perhaps, echoing my favourite line in the book, unafraid to engage in more physical methods of extracting information. "I'm a busy man- places to go, people to mutilate," he says.

In terms of plot, it's hard to believe this is a debut novel, so cleverly does Dalbuono weave the various strands of the story together, unveiling a few surprises along the way. Running parallel to the main investigations are a series of cutaways to another stream of consciousness where it's not initially clear who's speaking. As the book progresses these come into focus for an unsettling denouement, reinforcing how far the sexual deviance and violence of those in power has spread in Italy. I enjoyed the way that Dalbuono provided an insight into the Roma immigrant community as the story played out. The rum doings of various branches of the branches of organised crime are described with relish.

As the action pivots between Rome, Elba and Naples, the rendition of location and local knowledge shines through every scene. The sights, sounds and atmosphere of each setting will invade your senses. Particularly sentient were the scenes where Scarmacio, in the course of his investigation, is dispatched to a coastal fortress prison housing a sex offender dubbed *The Priest*. Only accessible by boat, Dalbuono totally captures the forbidding atmosphere of this sinister location, and the inherent sense of fear that each visit produces. Likewise, Rome and its inhabitants are ripe in detail, bringing to the fore the vibrant and well known sights of the city, and the scenes in the seeming idyll of Elba's tourist community take on a whole character of their own.

It is a delight to encounter a protagonist who I would be keen to meet again, and given such a promising beginning to a potential series, I very much hope this will be the case in subsequent books. *The Few* is a thoroughly enjoyable and thought-provoking debut.

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### **Brian Stoddart says**

It takes something to stand out in the field of Italian crime fiction but Anglo-Italian Nadia Dalbuono has done that exceptionally well.

It starts with the clever idea of main character Leone (Leo) Scamarcio being the son of an old school Mafia boss but who has joined the cops. One of the great twists here is that in order to solve his problems he has in the end to revisit that Mafia heritage. Along the way he encounters the usual bureaucratic and political roadblocks to be anticipated in Italy, and the usual compromised positions held by leaders in all spheres, including the police.

This is a terrific book that is very well written, develops really interesting characters, and tells us a lot about contemporary Italy in an engaging way.

There will be more, no doubt, and it will be very welcome

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### **Josh says**

*THE FEW* is an Italian police procedural that maintains a constant mystery throughout – though it's not the murder of a rent-boy that captivated me, rather the person pulling the chief of police's strings; a mysterious handler dictating terms and using sheer political power in their pursuit of their intended version of the truth.

For Detective Scamarcio and his superior Garramone, the murder of a male prostitute (or rent boy as referred to in *THE FEW*) looms as a career defining case, one that leaves no stone unturned as it unearths the sect known as *The Few*. With severe ramifications hanging over the heads of many, the case threatens to destroy more than it can possibly save.

Detective Scamarcio is an interesting character; one constantly conflicted by his criminal heritage and law abiding occupation. It's something that the character tries to distinguish himself from, toting the line of cop over Mafioso. Despite his best intentions the lives bleed into one another to formulate an interesting dynamic and complementary secondary plot.

The case evolves and morphs into a larger all-encompassing criminal investigation that spans sex trafficking, kidnapping, and murder among other heinous crimes. Tying the narrative together is the continued icy-at-times relationship between Scamarcio and his superior in chief of police Garramone. I enjoyed the constant shroud of mystery surrounding Garramone's motives and the kept-in-the-dark Scamarcio's battle to perform his duty. Not only is Scamarcio up against a disturbing case, he's also fighting against internal police bureaucracy.

While it felt like *THE FEW* took a little while to gain momentum following an entertaining opening, I can

see the rationale behind building the caseload and establishing the interlocking crimes to form a broader picture. Author Nadia Dalbuono has written a decent first up police procedural that has me looking forward to reading the further series installments.

Review first appeared on my blog: <http://justaguythatlikes2read.blogspot...>

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### **Richard Blower says**

Great first book. Looking forward to the next one

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### **David Redwood says**

I have to thank Goodreads for putting me on to Nadia Dalbuono. Really enjoyed "The Few" and will certainly go on to read more. Nadia's book was exciting and her main protagonist had an interesting back story.

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### **Scribe Publications says**

*Nadia Dalbuono is writing this with both the detachment of an outsider and the understanding of a resident. As with Donna Leon, Dalbuono clearly sees the terrible stagnation and immorality of the system ... The Few is an exciting and compelling read.*

***Crime Squad***

*Has Donna Leon found her match?*

**Maxim Jakubowski, *lovereading.co.uk***

*[An] unsettling detective thriller set in the dark heart of the corrupt Italian political system.*

**Chris Herde, *Daily Telegraph***

*[A] really good debut ... The plot is murky and messy, the pace is fast and the characters well drawn, conflicted and compromised.*

***Auckland Herald***

*[A] professional and confident foray into the realms of crime fiction ... This detective has many more novels in him than the modest two-volume series planned so far.*

**Kerryn Goldsworthy, *Canberra Times***

*Corruption, politics, and personal agendas combine to create a murky atmosphere of confusion and chaos. Scamarcio is a complicated character, as befits such a complex storyline ... Slow burning, slow building, but ultimately rewarding.*

**Tessa Chudy, *Good Reading magazine***

*Packed full of twists and turns with never a dull moment ... A real page-turner.*

***Crime Review***



*Gripping ... You won't be able to put down this unsettling tale.*  
**The Sun**

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## **proxyfish says**

*I received this book from Scribe Publications as part of the Goodreads giveaway scheme in return for an honest review*

### **Reviewed on my blog - Books by Proxy**

4 Stars

Just when I was having Italian crime novel withdrawal symptoms – thank you Donna Leon – Nadia Dalbuono's debut novel, *The Few*, comes along to send me spiralling into the murky underworld of murderers, drug pushers and human traffickers. As the bodies start to pile up, Detective Leone Scamarcio must navigate his way through mafiosi, corrupt politicians and drug lords to get to the root of the crime. With a shadowy past of his own, secrets will be spilled, blood will be shed and one question remains: can those above the law be brought to justice?

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*The Few* is a darkly disturbing thriller which transports you into a world of sex workers, corrupt politicians and child traffickers, a world which is both horrifying and disturbingly real. Dalbuono writes with skill and detail and, as the investigation grows and the number of suspects lengthens, the plot twists and turns to create an intricately woven narrative. The complexity of the plot coupled with almost constant tension lend themselves to a highly sophisticated and wholly convincing novel.

*The Few* opens at a steady pace, gathering momentum as links and connections are uncovered which take Scamarcio from the heart of Rome to the beaches of Elba in an increasingly complicated investigation. Dalbuono captures both the romanticism and the gritty reality of Rome and Elba in an unobtrusive flow of description which finely balances the contradictory beauty of the country with its dark conspiratorial undercurrents. Whilst the narrative is always to the point and remains tense throughout, the short descriptive passages slot in seamlessly to lend depth and realism to the narrative.

Detective Leone Scamarcio is a convincing and likeable character. He is a man who has worked hard to escape his past and who finds himself confronted with it on one too many occasions. He is the emotional connection to the novel, the guiding hand who exhibits the reactions the reader is likely to experience. The other characters are created to draw suspicion – law enforcers, politicians and civilians alike – everyone is a suspect, everyone is linked and everyone is utterly suspicious. *The Few* might not be so few after all.

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*The Few* is a fantastic debut with a charm all of its own and a suitably mysterious protagonist who is sure to draw readers back for more. Fans of crime thrillers should find this a well-paced, exhilarating read and, having only amplified my cravings for more Italian crime fiction, I can only wait for *The American's* release next year. Thoroughly enjoyed. Heartily recommended. Want more.

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## Tonstant Weader says

The Few is the first in a mystery series from Nadia Dalbuono that promises to be an excellent procedural series with complex characters and mysteries that explore the politics and corruption of contemporary Italy. Leone Scamarcio is the son of a former mafia leader who was killed about a year or so before the series begins, a killing that splashed Scamarcio's face and name all over the media. A mafioso's son becoming a policeman is high drama to the news. This causes him trouble more often than not.

His boss gives him a case involving a young man, a sex worker, who has been murdered. Shortly before his murder, a high-ranking government minister was extorted by photos of him with the murdered man and another young man. The Prime Minister who sounds very much like Berlusconi has requested an investigation. The hope is the murderer can be found before his death is connected to the pictures which are bound to come out soon.

While looking for the second young man in the photos, Scamarcio is told he can find out more if he goes to Elba. So he goes there and discovers a young girl, the daughter of American tourists, is missing. Soon Elba seems like crime central and the local police don't really appreciate Scamarcio's help. How what is happening on Elba connects to the murder in Rome is a twisted and complex mystery.

The Few is an excellent mystery and a great foundation for a new series. We have hints of untold or forgotten stories in Scamarcio's past that must surely be answered in future installments. We have a detective who both methodical, conscientious, and intuitive. He is wary of committing too deeply to a single theory of the crime and casts a wider net than most series detectives. We see him wondering, unsure and trying to choose the next course. However, when his instincts speak, he listens. This makes him better than the average series detective who usually has a narrative and sticks to it.

Italy seems very real in The Few, there is corruption, but there is no stereotypical fatalistic resignation to perpetual corruption. Too often mysteries situated in Italy either ignore or obsess with the infamous mafia. The thing is, except for snatch-and-grabs and murders among friends and family, most crime is organized to some extent. Every country has organized crime and it is usually local to the country. There's organized crime in Italy, sure, but also in Japan, India, Russia, Sweden, and Vietnam. There is an A to Z of organized crime. It is refreshing to see an Italian-centered mystery dealing with organized crime networks from other countries.

The Few is scrupulously fair in giving us the information when Scamarcio gets it. We have no scenes with him reading a report and thinking, "Aha! That explains it all!" then rushing off with the solution while we are left in the dark. This makes me eager to read more in this series.

I received a copy of The Few from the publisher for review.

The Few at Scribe Publications  
Nadia Dalbuono author site

★★★★

<https://tonstantweaderreviews.wordpress.com>

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## James says

Every now and again a novel comes along that is so many things: crime novel, police procedural, political thriller, conspiracy thriller, social critique. Sometimes a book tries to tick more than one box but fails, the author overreaching their talents. But when a novel like this succeeds, and does so with apparent effortlessness, the result is something special.

So it is with Nadia Dalbuono's *The Few*. The novel tells the story of Detective Leone Scamarcio, the son of a Mafiosi who has turned his back on the family business. Instead he's signed up with the Rome police. Somewhere in the back-story his history has come back to haunt him and he is now distrusted by many of his colleagues. But he's good at his job and has earned the grudging respect of others. One day his superior hands him a file containing incriminating photographs of the foreign secretary and tells him to look into the circumstances that they were taken. Scamarcio senses that with Italy's poisonous history of political corruption, this case will prove his undoing, but orders are orders. When one of the other men in the photo ends up dead our protagonist's fears appear to be validated. Off we spiral into a world of rent boys, prostitution, grubby political intrigue and murder.

Just a glance at the burgeoning crime fiction section of any decent bookshop will tell you that seemingly every day a new procedural is published. Take one flawed cop, place him or her in some exotic (or not so exotic) corner of the globe, sprinkle in a serial killer with an unusual method of dispatching his or her victims and away you go. Personally I find such books a chore and try to be a little more discerning. Thankfully there are writers like Dalbuono producing books like *The Few*.

While on the surface it might appear that Dalbuono's novel has similarities with some of the more humdrum variety, I'm happy to report that they're only peripheral. While Scamarcio has a colourful background, is single, lives alone and smokes the occasional joint, he's not "damaged goods" or "flawed" in an obvious way. Neither is the setting overdone. Some novels seem to be as much travelogue as crime thriller, the author trying to show off their knowledge of the locale. In *The Few* it's just a natural outcrop of the story, geographical detail never getting in the way of narrative. Indeed, the sense of place is mainly set by the tone of the plot itself, for this is an intrinsically Italian mystery. The novel deals with the labyrinthine political manoeuvrings that plague Italian politics, the fictional Prime Minister being recognisable by any reader with even a passing knowledge of Silvio Berlusconi's antics. While the mafia's tentacles, which reach into the heart of the Italian state and make that country a byword for European corruption, are deftly handled. Without giving too much away the issue of VIP child sex rings rears its ugly head, reminiscent of the allegations that swirled around Marc Dutroux, the Belgium paedophile and serial killer, and now horribly prescient in the UK, with allegations of a Westminster child abuse network. And no, there's no serial killer in this novel, the murders committed by faceless agents of the state.

All in all this is brilliant novel, full of depth and nuance.

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