



# SUITE FRANÇAISE

STORM IN JUNE

EMMANUEL MOYNOT

*based on the book by*  
IRÈNE NÉMIROVSKY



## FRENCH PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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The novel *Suite Française*, written between 1940 and 1942, was not published until 2004, but it went on to earn author Irène Némirovsky the Renaudot Prize, a prestigious literary award, the first ever given posthumously. This essential book that has changed the lives of readers all over the world would not have seen the light of day without an extraordinary chain of historical events, including pure luck, chance meetings, and individual sacrifice and involvement.

Irène Némirovsky was born in Kiev in 1903. The daughter of a Jewish Ukrainian banker, raised with a love of French culture, she was sixteen when she and her family settled in Paris. Ten years later, her novel *David Golder* thrust her to the forefront of the French literary scene. The dozen books and short stories she wrote over the following decade earned her admiration and controversy too, thanks to the violent lucidity and cruelty of her descriptions of a world destined for destruction.

The Occupation and the Vichy regime's anti-Semitic laws would put an end to her brilliant career. Irène was forbidden from publishing, and reduced to selling her writing under a pseudonym to the newspapers that would still print her stories. She retreated to the Burgundy village of Issy-l'Évêque with her husband Michel Epstein and their two daughters, Denise and Élisabeth. To help fill the void created by exile, Irène began an extraordinary project. She would tell the story of the war as it was unfolding in five volumes taken straight from current events.

Two novels were completed, written in her cramped handwriting in a leather-bound notebook, *Storm in June* (*Tempête en juin* in French) and *Dolce*, collected in English under the title *Suite Française*. That highly creative period was halted when she was arrested by French police on July 13, 1942. She was sent to Auschwitz and died there, no doubt of typhus, a month later.

Arrested along with her, Michel Epstein had just enough time to tell Denise, his older daughter, never to let the red suitcase out of her sight, for it held her mother's famous notebook. He too ended up in Auschwitz, where he died in the gas chambers shortly after his arrival. The two little girls were spared by a German officer who refused to carry out the Vichy regime's directives. Moving from basement to convent, from a Catholic residence to families willing to extend charity, they survived the war, mostly due to the generosity of Albin Michel, their mother's publisher, who continued to help them financially.

For half a century, the two sisters held onto the precious suitcase without opening it, afraid of discovering their mother's personal diary. At the end of the 1980s, as Élisabeth, who was working for the publisher Denoël, was writing a book about her mother, *Le Mirador*, Denise finally dared to open the notebook. She found herself doing the work an archeologist: untangling the threads of blue ink woven together to spin her mother's Rosetta stone, then reassembling the two major parts of a lost work that would bring this author back to public prominence again.

A few more meetings and the friendly hand of circumstance were needed before the two novels could land on Olivier Rubinstein's desk. At the time, he was the director of Denoël, and he immediately agreed to put out both books in one volume, using the title *Suite Française*.

The rest of the story is well known. An enthusiastic and emotional response, praise from the critics, prestigious awards, translations in thirty-eight countries, the *Times* of London's Book of the Year in 2006, and a million and a half copies sold in the United States. At age seventy-five, Denise Epstein, who had outlived her younger sister, traveled the world on behalf of her mother, who had fallen victim to the Holocaust. She dedicated the rest of her life to that quest, and died in 2013. She would not see the film that Englishman Saul Dibb would make of *Dolce*, the second part of *Suite*, nor this adaptation of *Storm in June*.

We dedicate this book to her with all our heart.

# The Preparations



CHILDREN, YOUR FATHER IS HERE...



ADRIEN, IS THAT YOU?

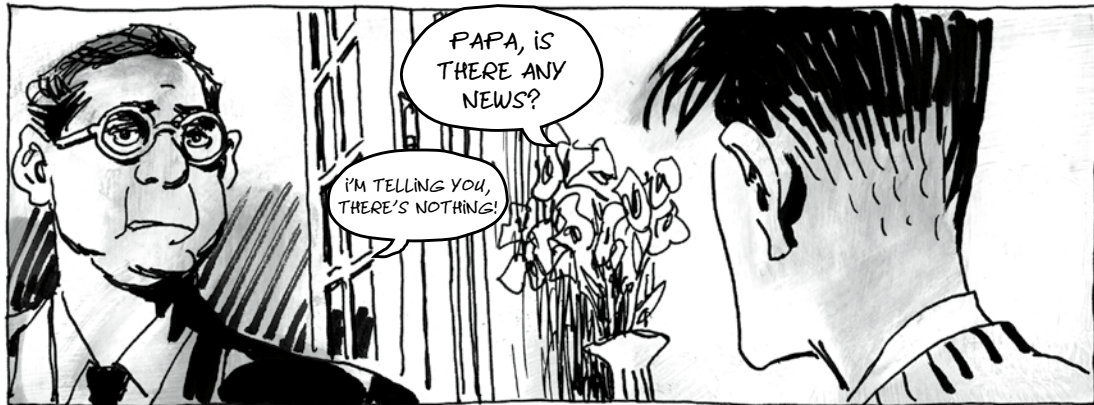


ADRIEN, YOU'RE HOME EARLY! WHAT'S...

NOTHING, NOTHING, GO ON WITHOUT ME, I'VE EATEN ALREADY.



CAREFUL, GRANDPA, THE SOUP IS VERY HOT.



PAPA, IS THERE ANY NEWS?

I'M TELLING YOU, THERE'S NOTHING!



PPFFFFRRRRRT...

DIDN'T I TELL YOU?

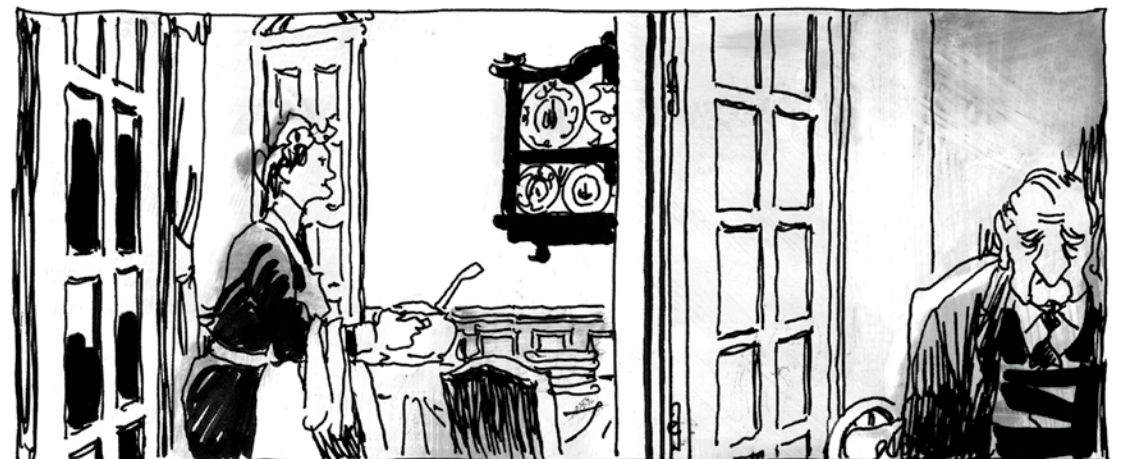


I'M LEAVING EVERYTHING TO THE CHURCH!

DON'T TALK NONSENSE. THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME TO THINK OF THOSE THINGS.



GO AHEAD AND FINISH EATING. I'LL BE IN THE LIBRARY.



# SUITE FRANÇAISE: STORM IN JUNE

A GRAPHIC NOVEL

**EMMANUEL MOYNOT**

Based on the book by Irène Némirovsky

Translated by David Homel

ISBN 978-1-55152-596-9

\$21.95 USA & Canada (other territories TBA)

216 pp; 7" x 10"

Trade paperback

Genre: GRAPHIC NOVELS (Literary)

## **PUBLICATION MONTH:**

Canada & USA: October 2015

UK/Australia/New Zealand: November 2015

ARSENAL PULP PRESS

[arsenalpulp.com](http://arsenalpulp.com)

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Distributed in the USA by Consortium

Distributed in Canada by University of Toronto  
Press (sales by Ampersand, Inc.)

Distributed in the UK/Europe by Turnaround

Distributed in Australia/New Zealand by  
NewSouth Books

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*Suite Française*, an extraordinary novel about life in France just as it was plunged into chaos with the German invasion of 1940, was a publishing sensation ten years ago; Irène Némirovsky completed the two-volume book, part of a planned larger series, in the early 1940s before she was arrested in France and eventually sent to Auschwitz, where she died. The notebook containing the novels was preserved by her daughters but not examined until 1998; it was finally published in France in 2004 and became a huge international bestseller, including in North America, where it has sold over 1 million copies.

This dramatic and stirring graphic novel, translated from the French and faithful to the spirit of Némirovsky's story, focuses on Book 1, entitled "Storm in June," in which a disparate group of Paris citizens flees the city ahead of the advancing German troops. However, their orderly plans to escape are eclipsed by the chaos spreading across the country, and their sense of civility and well-being is replaced by a raw desire to survive.

**A film version of *Suite Française*, starring Michelle Williams, Kristen Scott Thomas, and Margot Robbie, will be released in North America this fall.**

**Emmanuel Moynot** is a graphic artist who has authored more than forty graphic novels published in France since the 1980s, including several featuring detective Nestor Burma, based on the crime novels of Léo Malet. He lives in Bordeaux, France.