



Fire in the Blood

By Irène Némirovsky

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Here is a missing piece of the remarkable posthumous legacy of Irène Némirovsky, author of the internationally acclaimed *Suite Française*.

Written in 1941, the manuscript of *Fire in the Blood* was entrusted in pieces to family and a friend when the author was sent to her death at Auschwitz. The novel—only now assembled in its entirety—teems with the intertwined lives of an insular French village in the years before the war, when “peace” was less important as a political state than as a coveted personal condition: the untroubled pinnacle of happiness.

At the center of the tale is Silvio: in his younger years he fled the boredom of the village and made a life of travel and adventure. Now he’s returned, living in a farmer’s hovel in the middle of the woods, and, much to his family’s chagrin, perfectly content with his solitude.

But when he attends the wedding of his favorite young cousin—“she has the thing that, when I was young, I used to value most in women: she has fire”—Silvio begins to be drawn back into the complicated life of this small town. As his narration unfolds, we are given an intimate picture of the loves and infidelities, the scandals, the youthful ardor and regrets of age that tie Silvio to the long-guarded secrets of the past.

Némirovsky wrote with a crystalline understanding of the pretensions and protections of society, and of the varied workings of the human heart, in language as evocative of a vanished era as of the emotional and moral ambiguities in her characters’ lives. All of which was evident in *Suite Française*—and abundantly evident again in this powerful, passionate novel.

A Note on the Text

Until recently, only a partial text of *Fire in the Blood* was thought to exist, typed up by Irène Némirovsky’s husband, Michel Epstein, to whom she often passed her manuscripts for this purpose. However, Michel's typing breaks off at the words 'I felt so old' (see p. 37), leaving the novel unfinished.

Did Michel stop typing when Irène was arrested and deported to Auschwitz on

13 July 1942? Or perhaps even earlier in 1942, when she could no longer find a way to get her novels and short stories published? As readers will learn from the Preface to the French edition of this novel found at the back of the book, it is likely that Némirovsky was still working on *Fire in the Blood* in 1942. We know this thanks to the work of Olivier Philipponnat and Patrick Lienhardt, who were commissioned to write a biography of Némirovsky, and who began extensive research into her archive. Two pages of the original manuscript were found to have been in the suitcase that Némirovsky's daughter, Denise Epstein, carried with her from Issy-l'Évêque when she and her sister, Elisabeth, fled after their mother's arrest, and which contained Némirovsky's great lost novel *Suite Française*. And as Philipponnat and Lienhardt trawled the Némirovsky archive at the Institut Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (IMEC), they discovered, amidst papers given by Némirovsky for safe-keeping to her editor and family friend in the spring of 1942, the rest of the missing manuscript: thirty tightly packed pages of handwriting, with very few crossings out, the beginning of which corresponded to Michel's typed version.

It is an extraordinary collection of papers, which adds to our understanding of Némirovsky's oeuvre. As well as the manuscript of *Fire in the Blood*, it contains Némirovsky's working notebooks dating back to 1933, successive versions of several of her novels including *David Golder* as well as outlines for *Captivité*, the projected third part of *Suite Française*.

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Fire in the Blood By Irene Nemirovsky Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best of the Month, October 2007: As the Nazis advanced on France, celebrated writer Irène Némirovsky composed two final masterworks: *Suite Française* and *Fire in the Blood*. The first, smuggled out in a suitcase by her escaping daughters when Némirovsky was taken to her death at Auschwitz in 1942, surfaced more than 60 years later and restored her bestselling status. The other, two pages of which slipped out in that same suitcase, was thought lost--until biographers discovered the rest of the manuscript in papers given to Némirovsky's editor for safekeeping. A worthy companion to *Suite Française*, it follows three interwoven stories across two decades, when the hot-blooded affairs of youth threaten the cool calm of middle age. Once it has all unraveled, the last line lodges in your heart like a sliver. If only there could have been more. --*Mari Malcolm*

From Publishers Weekly

When she was writing *Suite Française* in 1940, Némirovsky, who died in Auschwitz in 1942 before turning 40, was also reworking this novel, newly discovered among her papers. Though composed on a smaller canvas, it is another keenly observed study of human nature, and in this case of Burgundy *paysans*. In a leisurely narrative, middle-aged narrator Silvio recounts three interlocking stories of love and betrayal over two decades. These secret affairs, he says, can be explained only by fire in the blood, the intense passion that can overtake men and women when they are young, highly sexed and vulnerable. Silvio's laconic descriptions of unappeasable desire are seasoned by bitter assessment of the wisdom earned after things cool. Linked through blood and common local history, the characters in this *la ronde* of betrayal exist in a seemingly idyllic community that is always alert for deviations from the social code. Némirovsky's restraint in unfolding her story contributes to the emotional crescendo at the story's denouement. In its penetrating distillation of manners and mores, this spare and elegant book makes a worthy follow-up to *Suite*. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Given the astounding success of *Suite Française*, critics were overjoyed to find another book by Irène Némirovsky, who wrote about a dozen novels and many short stories during her lifetime. (Though relatively new to American readers, Némirovsky published a French best seller, *David Golder*, in 1929). *Fire in the Blood*, which survived as a partially typed manuscript, raises inevitable comparisons to *Suite Française*. Reviewers agreed that despite its smaller, less powerful scope and lack of immediacy, the novel is a small gem in its depiction of social relations in the French countryside. A few cited some purple prose, a clunky narrator, and a rather unremarkable love story, but Némirovsky's insight into human nature more than compensates for these flaws.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Van Gee:

Do you have favorite book? Should you have, what is your favorite's book? Book is very important thing for us to understand everything in the world. Each book has different aim as well as goal; it means that guide has different type. Some people truly feel enjoy to spend their time and energy to read a book. They are reading

whatever they consider because their hobby is reading a book. Think about the person who don't like looking at a book? Sometime, man feel need book once they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you'll have this Fire in the Blood.

James Drennan:

Do you certainly one of people who can't read gratifying if the sentence chained within the straightway, hold on guys this specific aren't like that. This Fire in the Blood book is readable by simply you who hate those perfect word style. You will find the facts here are arrange for enjoyable reading experience without leaving even decrease the knowledge that want to offer to you. The writer connected with Fire in the Blood content conveys thinking easily to understand by most people. The printed and e-book are not different in the content material but it just different as it. So , do you nonetheless thinking Fire in the Blood is not loveable to be your top list reading book?

Edward Trotta:

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they carrying out activity like watching television, planning to beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Would you like to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? May be reading a book could be option to fill your free of charge time/ holiday. The first thing you will ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to try out look for book, may be the guide untitled Fire in the Blood can be fine book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Manuel Frazier:

Some individuals said that they feel bored stiff when they reading a e-book. They are directly felt it when they get a half elements of the book. You can choose the book Fire in the Blood to make your personal reading is interesting. Your own personal skill of reading proficiency is developing when you just like reading. Try to choose simple book to make you enjoy to learn it and mingle the idea about book and examining especially. It is to be very first opinion for you to like to open up a book and learn it. Beside that the publication Fire in the Blood can to be your new friend when you're experience alone and confuse with what must you're doing of these time.

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