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The Seine Was Red: Paris, October 1961

Leïla Sebbar, Mildred Mortimer

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Leïla Sebbar's novel recounts an event in French history that has been hidden for many years. Toward the end of the Algerian war, the FLN, an Algerian nationalist party, organized a demonstration in Paris to oppose a curfew imposed upon Algerians in France. About 30,000 Algerians gathered peacefully, but the protest was brutally suppressed by the Paris police. Between 50 and 200 Algerians were killed and their bodies were thrown into the Seine. This incident provides the background for a more intimate look into the history of violence between France and Algeria. Following three young protagonists?one French, one Algerian, and one French national of Algerian descent?Sebbar takes readers on a journey of discovery and comprehension. Mildred Mortimer's impressive translation conveys the power of Sebbar's words in English and allows English-speaking readers an opportunity to understand the complex relationship between past and present, metropole and colony, immigrant and citizen, that lies at the heart of this acclaimed novel.

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