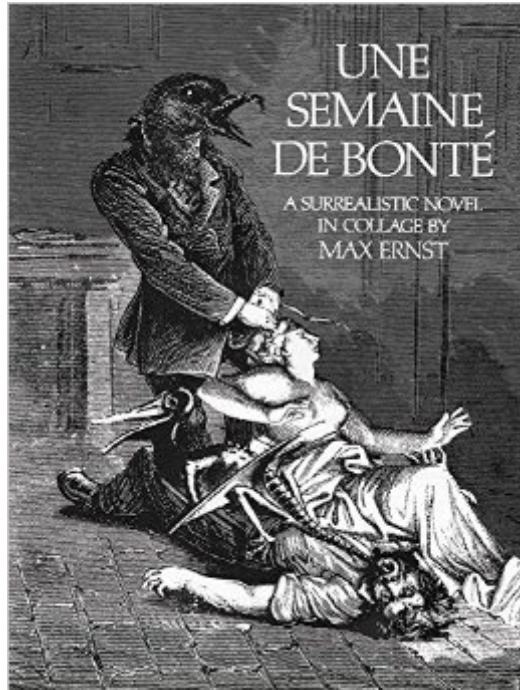


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# Une Semaine De Bonte: A Surrealistic Novel In Collage



## Synopsis

"One of the clandestine classics of our century." — The New York Times This is the legendary collage masterpieces of Max Ernst (b. 1891), one of the leading figures of the surrealist movement and among the most original artists of the 20th century. From old catalog and pulp novel illustrations, Ernst produced this series of 182 bizarre and darkly humorous collage scenes of classic dreams and erotic fantasies which seem mysteriously to lure the unconscious into view: Stern, proper-looking women sprout giant sets of wings, serpents appear in the drawing-room and bed chamber, a baron has the head of a lion, a parlor floor turns to water on which some people can apparently walk while others drown. *Une Semaine De Bonté* is divided into seven parts, one for each day of the week, with each section illustrating one of Ernst's "seven deadly elements." "Oedipus," "The Court of the Dragon," and "Three Visible Poems" are among the startling episodes of Ernst's week. The Dada and surrealist epigraphs which introduce each section appear in this edition in both French and English. *Une Semaine De Bonté* first appeared in 1934 in a series of five pamphlets of fewer than 1,000 copies each, and has never been reprinted before this present edition. Previously available only to a few libraries and collectors, this is a major source and great treat for anyone interested in the surrealists and their work, in collage, visual illusion, dream visions, and the interpretations of dreams.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

great drawings of big author, worth the have it, but I saw originals in Vienna and must say that I was

bit disappointed when I saw the drawings in the book. I think that they are not so good scanned. Originals have very thin lines and in the book that lines are not so thin, so much detail because of that is lost. Second, on original drawings some parts are stucked, and you see that in different shades of paper. And in the book all is on white paper so you cant know which part is collage. Hope that was helpful

These works convey a set of very disparate impressions. The first, visual level displays seamless craftsmanship. No untidy edges appear, the kind that mar so many collages. Careful matching of the different pieces works well, too - in most cases, it looks very nearly as if the whole composite image were the work of one engraver. Ernst's careful assemblage does a lot to support the viewer's suspension of disbelief. Then, at the narrative level, each image evokes some profound or baffling meaning. A lion-headed hero supervises a guillotining, or awaits his turn; women in dreamy deshabille sleep through flooding of their boudoirs; bat-winged matrons and falcon-headed men discourse in Victorian drawing rooms; collisions and juxtapositions of too many elements to name appear, page after page. But no image stands alone, each appears as one element of a sequential narrative. Things begin to break down at the sequence level, however. What exactly transpires, and why? Not just ambiguous, these series stand boldly and deliberately opaque, challenging the reader to assign any meaning whatsoever - neither confirming nor denying any that one might try to impose. At the historical level, "Une Semaine" offers another range of potential interpretations. As image-based storytelling (and as a member of the wordless species within that genus), this stands squarely in a tradition with roots in the Lascaux caverns and a blossoming in today's effusion of graphic novels. It connects eighteenth century commercial engraving to some of the most radical and exploratory art of twentieth century surrealism. It moves away from the older narrative tradition, a visual retelling of myth or history well-known throughout the viewers' culture and education, into a more modern kind of involvement. That involvement demands that the viewer's understanding contribute as much to the story as the artists' image-building did - rather than an experience of cultural sharing, viewers all stand alone in their understanding of work. Then, in its purely commercial aspect, this stands as another service that Dover has provided to the thoughtful reading community. The book itself sits well in the lap, plenty large enough for the reader to examine in detail. Like other Dover editions, it makes little-known works available in affordable, durable bindings with dense printing on opaque paper - visual bleed-through just doesn't happen. Admittedly, Ernst doesn't suit every taste (and barely suits mine). If you want a visual experience of marvel, challenge, and mystery, however, this will amply repay the time you spend with it.-

If you're looking for inspiration, you can jar something loose in your head with this beautiful, inexpensive book. This legendary collage masterpiece remains so obscure that most poets & artists aren't even aware of its existence. What does it all mean? I sure don't know but it makes me feel strange in the pit of my stomach. A wild one, kids! Bob Rixon, WFMU-FM

Here's an "ahead of its time" classic that will provide inspiration if you're a graphic artist, hours of fun puzzling over its meaning if you're not an artist, and quite the psychedelic experience either way. Max Ernst was a surrealist, but before you start envisioning Magritte or Dali's artwork you'd better remember that not all surrealism looked that way. Ernst was a master of collage techniques, and in this book he creates what - on the surface - are literal-minded collages in that he uses black-and-white Victorian era magazine, journal, and book illustrations as his exclusive source material. This lends the images a certain holistic nature because they are composed of materials using similar reproduction techniques. It's only when you actually look carefully at these pictures that you realize they are collages and not simply pre-existing works, and that there's something seriously odd about them. This is a world where pulp imagery runs headlong into academic-style nudes, Grandville-style beasts with the heads of animals but the bodies of gentlemen, out-of-context scientific apparati, and demons and dragons lifted from Dore's illustrations. It's sometimes amusing, sometimes disturbing, often nightmarish and will make you feel as though you're temporarily privvy to someone else's dreamworld. It's definitely dark more than light. As for me, I've spent many hours looking at this book even before I bought it, and I'm a huge fan of it. I think this book is best enjoyed in small doses of perhaps 30 pages or so in a sitting so that there's no risk of overkill. After a while, the constant use of black-and-white can be numbing in this dreamlike context. Ernst doesn't seem to have been constructing anything resembling a narrative or even a series of coherent vignettes, but does collect his collages into different themes. Some people describe this as a "graphic novel" but that isn't really an accurate use of the term as it exists today. This isn't a comic book, and it isn't a story. It is, however, a novel in a modern literary sense as there is a consistent and extended mood throughout. This book is highly recommended.

"Surrealism" is an overused word these days, drained of much of its original power ... but just open these startling pages of collage & you'll rediscover that it's still just as potent. Both disturbing dream & benign nightmare, the non-narrative accumulates in woozy intensity as you immerse yourself in it,

swept away willingly by its ghostly flood of images. Like a genuine dream, there are constant, tantalizing hints of unfulfilled meaning -- it almost makes sense, but never quite does -- but that's not frustrating in the least. Instead, depending on your moods, you'll find multiple meanings ... or you can simply enjoy the experience itself, without trying to find some rational skeleton behind it all. And if it leads you to more of Max Ernst's work, all the better! Highly recommended!

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