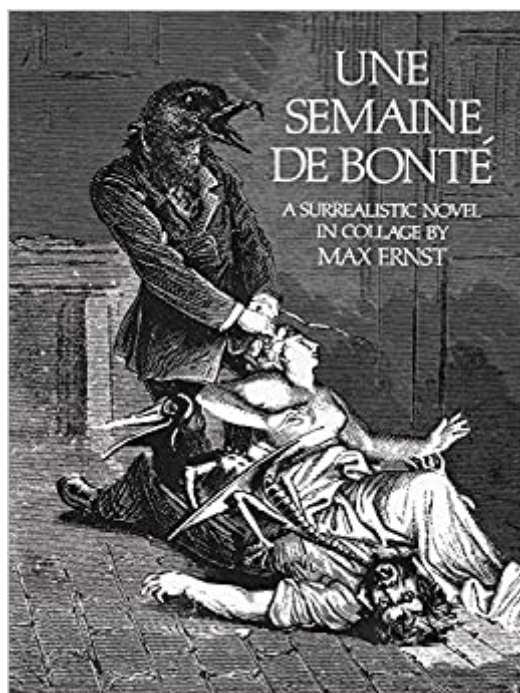


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# Une Semaine De Bonte: A Surrealistic Novel In Collage



## 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

Text: English, French (translation)

"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.

The time frame in which this series were created is astonishing and quite possibly this is what makes it such a mesmerising and theatrical journey. It has a frenetic relentlessness to it. The cohesive distinction of works created uninterrupted is clearly present. Ernst mined, arguably, near contemporary references and his unbound imagination for all the elements to this imagery (with some examination (of originals) there might be the detection of his own line to complete an effect but...I can only guess this maybe the case without access to the originals). He created such a sound world with seamless proportional interiors and exteriors populated by freakish and wonderful creatures the 'reader' is absorbed by it - 'belief' is suspended. The images, pretty generously printed in this affordable publication, are visually overwhelming. Some works so intricate they have the detail and impact of a Durer etching. Theatricality in discourse is part of the nature of Surrealism, and it has a motion film excerpt quality in effect.

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.

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"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!

Ah, Max! Here he invents the modern graphic novel. No dialogue, but the wonderful dadistic stories will keep you occupied for a long time.

Great art book

Ok, so I received what I paid for. It is printed on a regular thick paper, the illustrations are rich in details and the print quality is decent. For some reason I expected the book to be printed on a glossy or semi-gloss paper but, once again - the price is a sort of indicator of what you'll get. Expectations aside, the book is well worth it and I found it interesting.

I was hoping for a LOT more French text. The pictures are very interesting, but the description leads a person to believe every picture is captioned in French when they aren't.

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