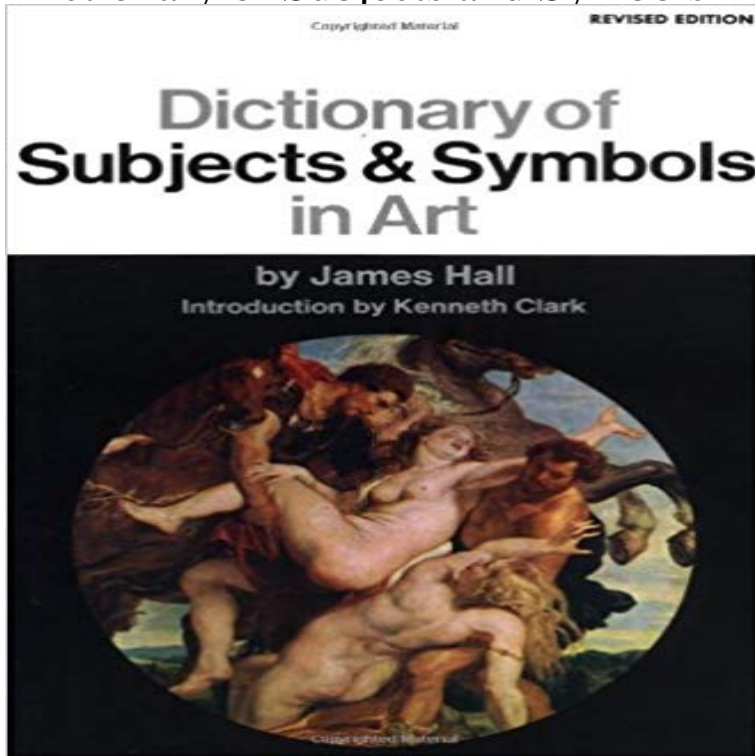


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The understanding and enjoyment of a work of art depends as much on the story it depicts as on the artist's execution of it. But what were once biblical or classical commonplaces are not so readily recognizable today. This book relates in a succinct and readable way the themes, sacred and secular, on which the repertoire of Western art is based. Combined here in a single volume are religious, classical, and historical themes, figures of moral allegory, and characters from romantic poetry that appeared throughout paintings and sculpture in Western art before and after the Renaissance. More than just a dictionary, this text places these subjects in their narrative, historical, or mythological context and uses extensive cross-referencing to enhance and clarify the meanings of these themes for the reader. The definitive work by which others are compared, this volume has become an indispensable handbook for students and general appreciators alike. This wholly redesigned second edition includes a new insert of images chosen by the author, as well as a new preface and index to highlight the ideas, beliefs, and social and religious customs that form the background of much of this subject matter.

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