

The Outsiders (S.E. Hinton, 1967)
The Chosen (ChaimPotok, 1967)
Go Ask Alice (Beatrice Sparks, 1971)
Speak (Laurie Halse Anderson, 1999)

THE CLASSICS GO GRAPHIC: CLASSIC BOOKS AS GRAPHIC NOVELS

By Vanessa Black

One of the most recent ways to reach out to young adult readers has been through introducing them to graphic novels. The graphic novel format pairs drawings and text for a different reading experience. There is a necessity not only to read the text, but a need to “read” and understand aspects of the story from the panels of drawings.

While many associate graphic novels with materials about superheroes, or the more popular Manga titles, there is a wide variety of genres available. There are many graphic novels made from popular fiction, such as the graphic novel edition of *Twilight*. As well there have been many non-

fiction graphic novels such as *Persepolis*, a story about a girl growing up during and after the Islamic Revolution. These are only samples of the many types and genres of graphic novels that exist. There is a graphic novel perfect for everyone’s reading interests. Most recently many publishers have adapted classic literature such as *Alice in Wonderland* or Shakespeare’s plays into graphic novel format. This has given a new life to some old books that may not be as appealing to young adults in their original format.

There have been several publishers adapt classics to the graphic novel format, including the well known Marvel Comics, Classical Comics, and Papercutz. Marvel Comics, the giant in the comics publishing industry, has an imprint called Marvel Illustrated that publishes graphic novel versions of classic literature. Planned or existing versions include *Moby Dick*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Dracula*, and *The Wizard of*

Oz. Papercutz has also published graphic editions through their series titled Classics Illustrated; Papercutz titles include *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Frankenstein*, *The Scarlett Letter*, and most recently, *Ivanhoe*.

For someone interested in Shakespeare, Classical Comics, which has been publishing versions of classics into graphic novels since 1941 (Prince, 2009) has issued versions of some of the bard's plays. Their lineup includes works like *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, and *Macbeth*. *A Midsummer's Night Dream* is set to be published in July 2011 and *Hamlet* in early 2012. Classical Comics also carries or is in the process of publishing versions of *Jane Eyre*, *Dracula*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Wuthering Heights*. To keep up with their most recent publications check out <http://classicalcomics.com>.

The Graphic Classics series, published by Eureka Productions and

distributed by Diamond Books, have seen adaptations of various works of classic authors such as Mark Twain, Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Louis Stevenson, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Louisa May Alcott. The Graphic Classics series includes some of their most popular and longer works, as well as shorter works like short stories and poetry. This series of books has been written with Young Adults ages 12 and up in mind (Graphic Classics, n.d., para. 1). To see more information about each volume in the series visit www.graphicclassics.com.

Reluctant Readers

The existence of classics as graphic novels offer a new way to reach out to reluctant readers, while at the same time introducing them to the classics rather than just popular literature. Reluctant readers are individuals that, for whatever reason, do not read. Sometimes their reluctance is due to a learning disability, but oftentimes it's lack of knowledge of what's out there. An

excellent way to reach out to reluctant readers is through an introduction to graphic novels (Crawford, 2004). Since many classics have been adapted into the graphic novel format, one can now introduce reluctant readers to the classics without fear of them being overwhelmed or discouraged. The publications by Classical Comics would be an especially good addition to library collections for reluctant readers as the publications are the same, but are available in several different reading levels (Werris, 2008).

Mark Twain stated that “a classic is something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read” (<http://www.graphicclassics.com/>, n.d. para. 1); however, with the existence of these classics in graphic novel format, it may entice more teens to read that classic novel they have always heard about. The possible selections for graphic novel adaptations are endless. There is an abundance of publishers

and versions available for the taking—surely one to suit every reader.

BOOKLIST: GRAPHIC NOVEL CLASSICS

The “Graphic Classics” Series: Authors



Mark Twain , Edgar Allan Poe
Arthur Conan Doyle,
H.G. Wells, H.P. Lovecraft
Jack London, Ambrose Bierce

Bram Stoker

Robert Louis Stevenson

Louisa May Alcott

O. Henry

Rafael Sabatini, Oscar Wilde



General Titles:

Fantasy Classics

Gothic Classics

Science Fiction Classics

Horror Classics

Adventure Classics

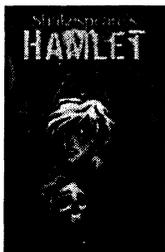
Shakespeare



Shakespeare, William. *Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: The Manga Edition*. Adapted by Adam Sexton. Wiley Publishing, Inc. 2008.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry V. The Graphic Novel*. Adapted by John McDonald. Classical Comics Ltd. 2007.

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth: The Graphic Novel*. Adapted by John McDonald. Classical Comics Ltd., 2008.



Shakespeare, William. *Shakespeare's Hamlet: The Manga Edition*. Adapted by Adam Sexton. Wiley Publishing, 2008.

Shakespeare, William. *Shakespeare's Julius Caesar: The Manga Edition*. Adapted by Adam Sexton. Wiley Publishing, 2008.

Shakespeare, William. *Shakespeare's Macbeth: The Manga Edition*. Adapted by Adam Sexton. Wiley Publishing, 2008.

Others



Shelly, Mary. *Frankenstein: The Graphic Novel*. Adapted by Jason Coble. Classical Comics. 2008.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Adapted by Alan Grant. Tundra. 2008.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island*. Adapted by Roy Thomas. Marvel. 2009.



Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit: An Illustrated Edition of the Fantasy Classic*. Adapted by Charles Dixon & Sean Deming. Del Rey. 2001.

Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre: The Graphic Novel*. Adapted by Amy Corzine. Classical Comics. 2008.

Carroll, L. (2010). *Alice in Wonderland: Graphic Novel*. Adapted by M. Powell and D. Perez. Stone Arch Books. 2010



Baum, L. F. (2010). *L. Frank Baum's The Wizard of Oz*. Adapted by M. Powell & J. Break. Stone Arch Books, 2010.