

Classical Comics
launches with the publication of
Henry V

a graphic novel adaptation of Shakespeare's most powerful, popular and compelling history play
on
Monday 5 November 2007

This is a fun way of getting into the stories
Ian McNeilly, National Association for the Teaching of English

A marvellous way to bring Shakespeare to new audiences. Bridging 400 years with a graphic pen is brilliant
Barbara Romer, founder of The New Globe Theater, New York

For those reluctant to tackle the original prose of older books, these adaptations introduce them to the great works of literature
www.forbiddenplanet.co.uk

The books bring cinematic excitement to every line to inspire young minds. Simply brilliant
Robert J Williamson, British Shakespeare Company

Now why didn't somebody think of this before? An inspired idea
Scott Tingley, Comics in the Classroom, Canada

Having been told by young readers that they were bored by the Bard, Classical Comics set out to make Shakespeare as energetic and colourful as Spiderman. With its new series of graphic novel adaptations of literary classics, Classical Comics has succeeded in bringing *Henry V* - Shakespeare's most powerful, popular and compelling history play - to life, with striking full-colour artwork depicting the drama, emotion and action scenes in an exciting, captivating way.

With literacy levels in schools, and amongst school leavers, at an all time low, Classical Comics has devised a revolutionary three-tier dialogue approach as an invaluable classroom teaching tool. Each book is published in three versions: Original Text - the full, unabridged script; Plain Text - a modern English version of the original script; and Quick Text - with reduced, simplified dialogue for easier and faster reading. Clive Bryant, of Classical Comics, explains the thinking behind this: *'We wanted to spread a joy and appreciation of literacy, and particularly to target readers in key stages 2 and 3. Often children of that age are forced to read Shakespeare, but they struggle to get past the language. The comic book format and three text versions will undoubtedly help with their understanding. By providing these three text versions, which are all on the same stunning artwork, we allow a reader to absorb the story at Quick Text level, proceed onto Plain English, and then onto the Original script. That way, they understand the play and can appreciate the beautiful language that Shakespeare used. We believe we've created a way for readers to enjoy these fantastic stories regardless of their age or their reading ability.'*

Not wanting to patronise its readers, and mindful of the sanctity of the original text, Classical Comics carried out a large amount of research to arrive at the right approach with its books. The response from teachers, parents and young people themselves has been extremely positive; three schools are currently road testing the books: Olveston Primary School, Gloucestershire, Ingleton Middle School, Lancashire and City of Ely Community College, Cambridgeshire. Teaching resources, in the form of both hard-copy ready-made lesson plans for teachers, and interactive whiteboard toolkits, are available with each book.

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Henry V is Classical Comics' first book in its range of graphic novel adaptations. Other great literary novels receiving the Classical Comic treatment include: *Macbeth* (February 2008), Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (Spring 2008), Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (Summer 2008), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (Summer 2008), *Romeo and Juliet* (Summer 2008), *Richard III* (Autumn 2008) and Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (October 2008).

The books retail at £9.99 each, and are available from all good bookshops nationwide.

Note to editors:

The Government recently commissioned an independent review of primary school reading policies. Headed by Jim Rose, Ofsted's former director of inspection, the review found that one in five children who leave English primary schools are unable to read and write properly.

Whilst Secretary of State for Education, Alan Johnson acknowledged that there is a clear link between reading for pleasure and academic performance, especially amongst boys.

Chair of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, Sir Cyril Taylor, highlighted the serious problem of literacy levels in schools in a recent speech. At the National Conference on Accelerated Learning in October 2007, he urged schools to encourage children to read more, citing statistics that show 20% of English 11-year-olds have not mastered the literacy skills needed to achieve level 4 at key stage 2; over a quarter of 14-year-olds fail to reach the standard expected in English, and only 67% of 14-year-old boys achieve the target level 5 at key stage 3.

According to Sir Cyril, there are an estimated 5 million adults in this country who are illiterate. 'What is unacceptable is for children to pass through secondary school and to leave school at 16 and still not be able to read properly' he says.

Copies of *Henry V* are available on request

Images/sample artwork/text are available on request

Copies of the teaching resources are available on request

Teachers/pupils from Olveston Primary School, Ingleton Middle School and City of Ely Community College, Cambridgeshire are available for interview



Bringing Classics to Life

www.classicalcomics.com

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