



# Classics Illustrated: A Cultural History, with Illustrations

*William B. Jones Jr.*

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The memorable Classics illustrated comic book series was published from 1941 to 1971, bringing abridged and illustrated versions of classic works of literature like Homer's *Odyssey*, Frank Buck's *Bring 'Em Back Alive*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and Goethe's *Faust* to millions of children and adults alike. Originally known as *Classic Comics*, the series was founded by Russian Jewish immigrant Albert Kanter, whose intent was to use a comic book form to introduce people to the works of Dumas, Melville, Dickens, and the like. This work tells Kanter's story and examines the cultural significance of the most successful publication of its kind in the context of the times it was being published. Attention is given to the evolving mission of the series to bring serious literature to popular culture, *Classics illustrated's* ability to stand up against the anti-comics hysteria of the early 1950s, and the various artists whose talents brought the stories and their characters to life.

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