



Lysistrata

Arisophanes

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Lysistrata, one of the most famous and most popular plays of the great comic writer Aristophanes (456-386 BC), tells the story of how the women from the Greek city states decide to take over the public treasury in Athens and to stop having sex with their husbands until the men agree to stop fighting a destructive civil war. Written in 411 BC, when the Athenians and the Spartans had been at war for about twenty years, the play is celebrated not only as an extremely funny and frank comedy but also as a major landmark of feminist and pacifist literature. The sexually explicit nature of the story and especially the use of huge male phalluses make Lysistrata a very robust comedy, so much so that in modern times it offended middle-class tastes for many years. However, the play also explores a number of serious themes: the connection between male sexuality and violence, the destructive effects of war on women's lives, and the corruption and absurdity of war, among others. The importance of these themes in recent decades has encouraged all sorts of productions and adaptations of this most eloquent and relevant of plays.

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