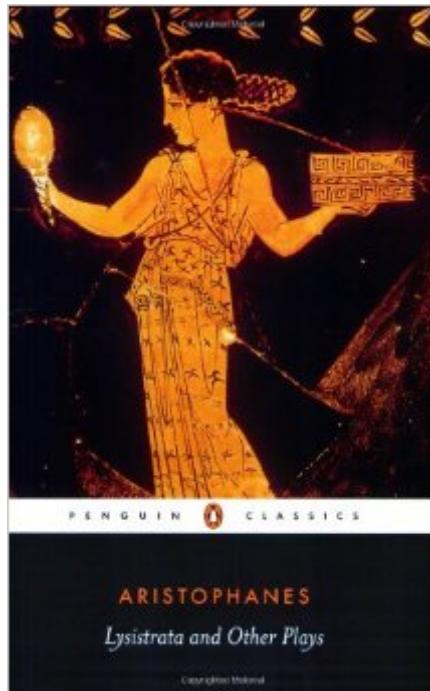


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Lysistrata And Other Plays (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Three plays by the comedian of Ancient Greece Writing at the time of political and social crisis in Athens, Aristophanes was an eloquent yet bawdy challenger to the demagogue and the sophist. The Achanians is a plea for peace set against the background of the long war with Sparta. In Lysistrata a band of women tap into the awesome power of sex in order to end a war. The darker comedy of The Clouds satirizes Athenian philosophers, Socrates in particular, and reflects the uncertainties of a generation in which all traditional religious and ethical beliefs were being challenged. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Love or at least lust wins out over war in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*; everybody knows that. But what stands out about this Penguin Books edition of *Lysistrata* is the way in which *Lysistrata* is brought together with two other, perhaps lesser-known plays from Aristophanes' canon, all of which are united by the way in which the great Athenian comic

dramatist uses comedy to confront the society of his time. Two of these plays -- "Lysistrata" itself and "The Acharnians" -- provide trenchant commentary on the Peloponnesian War in which Athens was then engaged against Sparta; the third, "The Clouds", is equally successful as a comedy of ideas. The title of "The Acharnians" (425 B.C.) made me ask, "Who were the Acharnians?" A quick bit of research showed me that Acharnae was a *deme* or district of Athens whose citizens were renowned for military valor; for a U.S. analogy, imagine an American playwright calling a play "The Texans" and thus capitalizing on Texans' reputation for particular fighting spirit within U.S. culture. The Acharnians of "The Acharnians" are the play's chorus -- "a group of old war veterans, the kind of guys who like to sit around and recount their courage of old, while expecting the younger generation to emulate their example. And these old Acharnians are anything but happy with the play's protagonist, Dikaiopolis. You see, Dikaiopolis (whose name, to me, sounds more fitting for a city than for a person) sees the absurdity of the Peloponnesian War ("The Acharnians" was first performed in the war's sixth year), and wishes to make what amounts to a separate peace.

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