

Lysistrata, from Perseus Project:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Aristoph.+Lys.>

Edited by Jeffrey Henderson

Speaking characters

Lysistrata, an Athenian woman
Calonice, an Athenian wife
Myrrhine, an Athenian wife
Lampito, a Spartan woman
Magistrate, an Athenian bureaucrat
Old Women, three helpers of Lysistrata
Rod, Myrrhine's husband
Spartan Herald
Spartan Ambassador
Athenian Ambassador
Athenian, friend of the Ambassador

Mute characters

Athenian Wives
Foreign Wives
Policewoman with Wives
Slaves with Magistrate
Police with Magistrate
Athenian Old Women
Doorkeeper
Nurse with Rod
Baby with Rod
Reconciliation, a naked young girl
Spartan Husbands
Athenian Husbands
Chorus of Old War-Veterans, twelve
Chorus of Old Wives, twelve

Lysistrata

If I'd invited them to drink some wine
or talk about the kids or go out dancing,
you'd hear the sound of high heels everywhere.
But now there's not a single wife in sight.
Well, here's my next-door neighbor, anyway.
Hi, Calonice.

Calonice

Hi to you, Lysistrata.
Hey, why the dirty looks? Cheer up, kiddo.
Don't frown, you'll wrinkle up your pretty face.

Lysistrata

I'm really angry, Calonice, deeply hurt,
in fact offended by the wives, by *us*,
because, according to our husbands we're
the best at clever schemes--

Calonice

And that's the truth.

Lysistrata

--but when I tell them all to meet me here,
to scheme about the most important things,
they're sleeping in and don't show up.

Calonice

They'll show.
It's not so easy getting out this early.
We've got to do our husbands little favors,
we've got to get the servants out of bed,
we've got to wash and feed and burp the kids.

Lysistrata

But they've got more important things to do than those!

Calonice

OK, Lysistrata, suppose
you tell me why we're meeting here. The deal.
Is it a big one?

Lysistrata
Very big.

Calonice
Not hard as well?

Lysistrata
It's very hard.

Calonice
Then why aren't we all here?³

Lysistrata
No, no, not that: if it were that, they'd come.
It's something I've been thinking hard *about*:
on sleepless nights I've tossed it back and forth.

Calonice
I guess it must be pretty limp by now.

Lysistrata
It's limp alright! So limp that the salvation
of all of Greece lies in the women's hands!

Calonice
In women's hands? We're goners then for sure!

Lysistrata
The nation's fate is in our hands alone!
The very existence of the Spartan people--

Calonice
It's best they *don't* exist, in my opinion.

Lysistrata
and all of Thebes completely obliterated--

Calonice
Not all of Thebes: please save the caviar!

Lysistrata

and I don't even want to mention Athens:
You know what I could say: you fill it in.
But all the women, if they'd only come,
the Theban women and the Spartan women
and us, together we could rescue Greece!

Calonice

But what can women do that's sensible,
or grand? We're good at putting make-up on,
designer clothes and wigs and necklaces,
imported gowns and fancy lingerie!

Lysistrata

And that's exactly what will save us all:
the little gowns, the perfumes, and the slippers,
the make-up and the see-through lingerie!

Calonice

And how do you figure that?

Lysistrata

No man alive
will want to lift his spear against another--

Calonice

I guess I better go and buy some clothes!

Lysistrata

or lift his shield--

Calonice

I'll put my best dress on!

Lysistrata

or draw his sword.

Calonice

I've got to buy some slippers.

Lysistrata

So don't you think the women should have come?

Calonice

Have come? They should have taken wings and flown!

Lysistrata

But look around, our fellow Athenians are late as always, chronically delayed.
But I'd have thought the women from the beach towns
and the islands--

Calonice

Lighten up, I know they're coming:
the island girls are good at riding topside.

Lysistrata

But what about the women from that town¹
that's always being burnt? I thought that they
would be the first.

Calonice

That shipping magnate's wife,
at any rate, is coming: she packed her schooner²
But look, I see some women coming now!

Lysistrata

And there's another bunch!

Calonice

But what's that smell?
What's *their* town?

Lysistrata

Garlicville.

Calonice

I might have guessed:
they must have walked right through it on their way.

Myrrhine

I hope we're not too late, Lysistrata.
Well. What's the matter?

Lysistrata

I'm not happy, Myrrhine,
when one is late for such important meetings.

Myrrhine

I couldn't find my girdle: it was dark.
But now we're here: so tell us what's important!

Lysistrata

Let's cool our heels a little while longer,
until the Thebans and the Spartans have a chance
to get here.

Myrrhine

Sure, let's wait, you're running things.
Hey, hold it, here's the Spartan Lampito now!

Lysistrata

Lampito, darling, welcome, greetings from us all.
what a gorgeous specimen, you lovely thing!
What healthy skin, what firmness of physique!
You could take on a bull!

Lampito

Is not impossible.
I go to gym, I make my buttocks hard.

Calonice

I've never seen a pair of boobs like that!

Lampito

You feel them: like blue-ribbon ox, you think!

Lysistrata

And this young lady here, where's she come from?

Lampito

Distinguished comrade from collective farm
of Thebes.

Myrrhine

I knew she had to be from Thebes:
she looks so natural and organic.

Calonice

Yes,
her organs have a cultivated look.

Lysistrata

And who is this one?

Lampito

Representative
from Gulf.

Calonice

She's got some pretty gulfs herself.
Here's one in front, and here's another one.

Lampito

Well: who convenes this revolutionary cell
of women?

Lysistrata

I did.

Lampito

Please to tell us then
agenda of the meeting.

Calonice

Yes, my dear,
we all would like to know what's so important.

Lysistrata

I'll tell you in a sec. But first I'll ask
you all a little question.

Calonice

Go ahead.

Lysistrata

The fathers of your kids: they're off at war.
You miss them, right? I know that each of you
have got a husband fighting in the war.

Calonice

My husband's been away for five whole months.
The northern front. He's guarding his lieutenant.

Myrrhine

Mine's in the south, been gone for *seven* months.

Lampito

And mine, no sooner he come home from war,
he take his shield and mobilize again.

Lysistrata

and how about our lovers? They're gone too.
And since we don't get imports any more,
we can't even buy a decent twelve-inch dildo.
It's not the real thing, but at least it's something.
So, are you ready, if I had a plan in mind,
to help me end the war?

Calonice

By God, I'm ready!
I'd even pawn my best designer jeans
and use the proceeds only to celebrate!

Myrrhine

And you could cut me up just like a pizza,
and everyone would get a slice of it!

Lampito

And I would climb the highest Spartan mountain:
from there I see where they have hidden peace!

Lysistrata

All right, I'll tell you. No need keeping secrets.
Well, women, if we're really serious
and want to make our husbands end the war,
we must swear off--

Calonice

Off what?

Lysistrata

You'll do it, then?

Calonice

We'll do it, even if it means our death!

Lysistrata

All right, here goes: we've got to swear off fucking.
Hey, where are you going? What's this backing off?
You shake your heads, you make a pickle-face.
How come you're all so pale? How come you're crying?
Are you with me or not? What do you want to do?

Calonice

I'm out. I guess I'll let the war drag on.

Myrrhine

Me too. I guess I'll let the war drag on.

Lysistrata

This from you, Ms. Pizza? You just said
you wanted us to slice you up in pieces.

Calonice

If there's anything else at all, that's fine. Through fire
I would even walk. But as for fucking, no.
There's nothing like it, dear Lysistrata.

Lysistrata

And you?

Wife

I guess I'll walk through fire too.

Lysistrata

Oh, what a low and shameless race are we!

No wonder men write tragedies about us.

We're nothing but a diaper and a bed.

But Lampito, comrade, surely you'll be willing.

If you alone would join me, we could do it!

What do you say?

Lampito

Is definitely hard

for women to sleep alone without the penis.

But nevertheless we must. We need the peace.

Lysistrata

Oh, dearest comrade, manliest of women!

Calonice

Look, *if* we really swear off...what you say,
which God forbid, would that be really likely
to bring peace?

Lysistrata

I am absolutely positive.

If we go home, and get ourselves made up,

and slip on one of our imported gowns

with nothing underneath, and show some crotch,

our husbands will get hard and want to screw,

but if we keep away and don't go near them,

they'll soon enough make peace, you have my word.

Lampito

Remember Helen of Troy, whose warrior husband
looked at her naked tits and dropped his sword!

Calonice

But what if our husbands pay us no attention?

Lysistrata

As the saying goes, you've got to use your head.

Calonice

But that's no good, I wouldn't stoop to that.
And they might resort to violence, drag us off
to the bedroom.

Lysistrata

Then you'll have to grab the door-jamb.

Calonice

And if they beat us up?

Lysistrata

Then don't cooperate.
Men don't enjoy it when they have to force you.
And make them suffer otherwise as well.
They'll give. There's never been a happy man
who doesn't have a peaceful married life.

Calonice

If you and Lampito want to, so do I.

Lampito

So: I am sure that we persuade our men
for peace with honor, nothing up the sleeve.²
But Athenians are a democratic mob:³
how you propose to get them to agree?

Lysistrata

Don't worry, I'll take care of the Athenians.

Lampito

But the military and industrial complex,
your capital funds stored on the citadel!

Lysistrata

I tell you, I've anticipated that.
We're seizing the whole citadel today.
The old women took on that assignment.
They'll pretend to have a religious business there.
They're at it now, while we conclude our plans.

Lampito

I must admit, your plan sounds quite complete.

Lysistrata

Then, Lampito, let's swear an oath without
delay, and then our plan will be official.

Lampito

Propose the oath, and we all swear to it.

Lysistrata

All right, then. Officeress! Where is she? Wake her up!¹
Put down your shield here. No, the other way.
Now someone get a victim.

Calonice

Say, Lysistrata,
what sort of oath is this?

Lysistrata

What sort of oath?
A slaughter in a shield, like tragic ones,
the fattened calf: you know.

Calonice

We can't do that,
we shouldn't use a shield if we want peace.

Lysistrata

What's your *suggestion*, smarty?

Calonice

I suggest,
we get a full-grown cock and slaughter that.

Lysistrata

You've got a one-track mind.

Calonice

But then what *will*
we swear on?

Lysistrata

Something's hit me. Want to hear?
Let's chuck the shield and get a giant wine-glass,
and slaughter a giant bottle of red bordeaux,
and swear we'll never fill the glass with water!

Lampito

Oh da! One cannot quarrel with that oath.

Lysistrata

So someone get the bottle and the glass.

Myrrhine

Oh God, girls, take a look at all that glassware!

Calonice

And just to touch this bottle makes me come!

Lysistrata

So put it down! Join hands, now, everyone.
O Goddess of Persuasion, Conspiratorial Glass:
receive this offering from the wives. Amen.

Calonice

Behold the color of the gurgling blood.

Lampito

Perceive the sweetness of its fair aroma.

Myrrhine

I'd like to be the first to take the oath.

Calonice

Hey, not so fast, you've got to wait your turn.

Lysistrata

No! *All* hands on the glass. You also, Lampito.
Let one of you repeat the oath I make,
and everybody else wear her allegiance.
I won't allow my lover or my husband--

Calonice

I won't allow my lover or my husband--

Lysistrata

to get near me with a hard-on. I can't hear you!

Calonice

to get near me with a hard-on. Oh my God!
My knees are getting weak, Lysistrata!

Lysistrata

At home my life will be completely chaste.

Calonice

At home my life will be completely chaste.

Lysistrata

I'll wear my sexiest dresses and cosmetics--

Calonice

I'll wear my sexiest dresses and cosmetics--

Lysistrata

to make my man as horny as can be.

Calonice

to make my man as horny as can be.

Lysistrata

But never will I willingly give in.

Calonice

But never will I willingly give in.

Lysistrata

If he should get his way by violence--

Calonice

If he should get his way by violence--

Lysistrata

I'll simply lie there uncooperative.

Calonice

I'll simply lie there uncooperative.

Lysistrata

I will not wrap my legs around his back--

Calonice

I will not wrap my legs around his back--

Lysistrata

nor will I crouch down like a lioness.

Calonice

nor will I crouch down like a lioness.

Lysistrata

As I drink this wine, so will I keep this oath--

Calonice

As I drink this wine, so will I keep this oath--

Lysistrata

but if I break it, may the wine be water.

Calonice

but if I break it, may the wine be water.

Lysistrata

So say you one and all?

All

So say we all!

Lysistrata

Alright, I'll do the honors.

Calonice

Just make sure
you take your share: we must have solidarity.

Lampito

What's that?

Lysistrata

The signal: as I said before,
the ladies who would seize the citadel.
They've done it already! Listen, Lampito :
return to Sparta now, and start the strike.
And leave these women here as hostages.
The rest of us will enter the citadel
and lock the gates and barricade ourselves.

Calonice

But don't you think the men will try to stop us?
And pretty quickly?

Lysistrata

They don't worry me.
They'll come with torches, shouting and making threats,
but they can't make us open up these gates
until they promise to honor our demands.

Calonice

By Sex and Love they can't! For otherwise,
we're nothing but a weak and gutless gender.

Chorus of Old Men

Leader

Come on, sergeant, get a move on,
even if your shoulder's raw
Hefting all this heavy wood and dragging all of it uphill.

Chorus

Incredible and shocking too
for wives to act like this!
We fed and clothed them: now we find
they're dirty terrorists!
They seized the City Treasury
and Offices of State.
They occupy our holy ground
and won't unlock the gate!

Leader

Butts in gear, men, double-time it,
put them right against the gate;
then we'll stack them all around it,
sealing in the enemy troops:
every single female traitor
party to this coup d'etat.
Then we'll make a giant bonfire:
toss your flares at my command.
Death by burning is our verdict,
starting with the bitch in charge.

Chorus

While we're alive they'll never have
the laugh on this old geezer!
Remember when the Spartans first
attempted such a seizure?
They came on big but went out small,
their reputation shot.
We didn't even let them keep
a rag to wipe their snot!

Leader

Ranks in order, siege positions,
just the way we did it then.
Let these women beat us now and
all our reputation's gone

Chorus

The goal of our journeys around the bend.
but the steepest part's at the very end.
Our shoulders are aching, we're out of fuel.
It would have been smarter to bring a mule.
But keep it moving all the same,
and don't forget to fan the flame.
There's little point in climbing higher,
then finding out we've lost our fire.
God, the smoke!

Chorus

The smoke's rushing out like a raving bitch
and biting our eyes with an awful itch.
Can't see where we're going: it seems to us
we're climbing the slopes of Vesuvius.
But hurry onward anyhow:
we've got to save the goddess now!
Our Purple Hearts aren't worth a dime
unless we help her out this time.
God, the smoke!

Leader

Now the fire's burning lively,
now the gods are on our side.
Stack the logs and set your torches,
then we'll charge the gate like rams,
Open up, you wives, or else we'll
burn the gates and smoke you out.
Placed the logs in orderly fashion.
Ah, this smoke is terrible!
Can't the generals hear us? Won't they
lift some logs? Our arms are dead.
Pot of Coals, it's up to you now:
furnish fire; I'll lead the charge.
Victory Goddess, lend assistance,
help us beat these mutinous wives!

Women's Chorus

Leader

I think I see the smoke and rising flames!
The siege is underway. We've got to hurry!

Chorus

Faster, faster, we've got to fly,
or else our friends will surely die!
Nasty elders have got a view
to hold a female barbecue!
We started early but might be late:
we had to fill our pitchers.
The well was jammed, we got delayed
by slaves and pushy bitches,
shouting, shoving, smashing pots,
banging heads and raising knots.
Now we're here with pitchers filled
to keep our friends from being grilled.

Chorus

There they are, the demented bums!
They're stacking logs to burn our chums,
shouting threats of an awful kind,
to leave but ash and smoke behind.
O Goddess, spare the women's life!
They occupied your temple
to save the Greeks from war and strife
and madness pure and simple.
Be our ally, help defend
women fighting evil men.
Help us with our pitchers filled
to keep our friends from getting grilled.

Women's Leader

Hold it, girls! What's this I see here?
Men, and evil bastards, too.

Men's Leader

What the hell is going on here?
Where's this swarm of women from?

Women

Scared of us? We're not so many.
Still, there's more where we came from.

Men

Boys, do you hear all this babble?
Someone bash her with a log.

Women

Put your pitchers on the ground, girls:
looks as if they want a fight.

Men

How'd you like to have your mouth shut?
Two or three punches ought to do.

Women

Come on, hit me: I'm not moving.
I would love to chew your balls.

Men

Quiet, or I'll bust your wrinkles!

Women

Go ahead, just lift your hand.

Men

What about my knuckles? What then?

Women

Want to have your guts pulled out?

Men

Tragic poets have a saying:
nothing's wilder than a woman!

Women

Come on, girls, let's lift our pitchers.

Men

What's this water for, you bitch?

Women

What's this fire, you mausoleum?

Men

Just a pyre for your friends.

Women

I'm about to douse your pyre.

Men

Douse it?

Women

That's exactly right.

Men

How'd you like your hair on fire?

Women

Get some soap: I've got your bath.

Men

Bath, you crone?

Women

You really need one.

Men

Listen to her!

Women

I've a right.

Men

Quiet!

Women

You're not judge and jury.

Men

Burn her hair!

Women

And now the bath!

Men

Goddamn!

Women

I hope we didn't scald you.

Men

Scald us? Stop! We've had enough!

Women

Maybe now you'll start to blossom.

Men

No, we'll wither up instead.

Women

You brought the fire: warm yourselves.

Magistrate

I hear our spoiled wives are out of hand.
Another phony festival for their wine-god,
a noisy rooftop party for Adonis,
just like the one that spoiled our assembly.
That ill-starred, foolish politician moved
we sail to Sicily, while his wife was dancing
and yelling for Adonis. When he said,
let's muster allied troops for this armada,
his wife was on the rooftop getting drunk
and yelling 'Oh doomed youth!' But he persisted,
the goddamned stubborn hotheaded son of a bitch!
That's just the kind of mischief wives can make!

Men's Leader

And wait till I tell you what they did to us.
They treated us like selves and dumped their pitchers
all over us and soaked our clothes through,
so anyone would say we pissed our pants!

Magistrate

It serves you right, I swear by the salty sea-god.
We men have only got ourselves to blame.
We virtually teach our wives to misbehave,
and so they're always nurturing their plots.
What do we say when we visit the marketplace?
'Oh, goldsmith, about that locket I bought from you.

My wife was having a ball the other night
and it seems this bolt here slipped right out of its hole.
I've got to leave, I'm travelling up to Bangor.
I'd be grateful if you'd visit her some night
with the proper tool and fix the hole that needs it.'
Another husband visits his local shoemaker,
a half-grown boy with a very full-grown cock.
'Say, shoemaker, about this pair of slippers:
my wife complains the orifice grips too tight;
her skin is very soft. While I'm at work,
please loosen up her orifice a bit.'
It's this complacency that leads to trouble,
so here I am, a supplier for the army,
in need of public funds, and now I find
the women shut me out of the treasury!
I'm wasting time. You slaves, bring on the crowbars!
I'll put a stop to all this female foolery.
You bozo, look alive! And you as well!
Stop wondering if they're any bars around.
Pick up those crowbars, take them to the gate,
and pry it open. Here, I'll show you how,
I'll help you pry.

Lysistrata

No need for any prying.
I'm coming out myself. No need for crowbars.
We don't need force, but rather brains and sense.

Magistrate

That so, you bitch? I'm calling a policeman.
Arrest this women, put the handcuffs on.

Lysistrata

By the goddess, if he lays a hand on me,
policeman or no policeman he'll regret it.

Magistrate

Can you be scared of her? Go on and grab her.
And you there, help him out. Hogtie thie woman!

Old Woman A

By the goddess, if you even raise your hand
to her, I'll beat you till you shit your pants!

Magistrate

What, shit my pants? Another policeman here!
Grab this one first, the one with the dirty mouth.

Old Woman B

By the goddess, if you lay a fingertip
on her, you'll need an icebag for both eyes.

Magistrate

Where'd she come from? Police! Arrest this woman!
Whoever's on this outing I'll arrest.

Old Woman C

By the goddess, if you make a move toward her,
I'll pull your hair out until you're bloody bald.

Magistrate

My god, I'm out of cops! I'm in a fix.
I *cannot* let myself be screwed by women!
We need a full-scale charge. Attention, Huns!
Prepare to charge!

Lysistrata

As you will quickly see,
we too have troops, four companies of women:
they're fully armed and on alert inside.

Magistrate

Go forward, Huns, and twist their arms behind them!

Lysistrata

Come forward, allied women, on the double!
You market-women, meter-maids, bag-ladies!
You check-out girls, mud-wrestlers, waitresses!
Attack them, stomp them, chew them, beat them up!
Cease fire! Stand at ease, don't chase them down!

Magistrate

Alas, my Huns are utterly defeated.

Lysistrata

But what did you expect? Did you imagine
that we were slaves, or did you think that women
cannot show courage?

Magistrate

courage, yes indeed,
provided there's a lot of booze inside 'em.

Men's Leader

Why waste your breath, my Magistrate,
why argue with these bitches?
You know the kind of bath we took
without that kind of soft soap.

Women's Leader

Dear sir, it's impolite to raise
your hand against your neighbors.
Try that again, we'll punch you out,
though we prefer decorum.
We promise to be meek as girls,
so don't stir up a mare's nest.

Men's Chorus

King of the gods, these women are beasts!
We need a plan, to say the least!
Let's try to find out
what they're angry about,
why they're raising hell
on our sacred citadel.

Men's Leader

Now question her and test her answers,
and don't be buffaloed.
It's bad enough they've gone this far;
we mustn't let it go!

Magistrate

First I'd like to know the reason
why you took the citadel.

Lysistrata

Confiscation of the money:
thus we put a stop to war.

Magistrate

Money's causing war?

Lysistrata

Exactly:
also the political mess.
Generals and politicians
argue war so they can steal.
Go ahead and fight, but henceforth
no more money leaves this place.

Magistrate

You will keep it.

Lysistrata

No, we'll save it.

Magistrate

Save it?

Lysistrata

What's so strange in that?
Don't we manage household money?

Magistrate

Not the same.

Lysistrata

How so?

Magistrate

It's war!

Lysistrata

Stop the war.

Magistrate

Then who will save us?

Lysistrata

We will.

Magistrate

You?

Lysistrata

That's right.

Magistrate

My god!

Lysistrata

What's your choice?

Magistrate

You're mad!

Lysistrata

Be angry.

Nonetheless we must.

Magistrate

No way!

Lysistrata

Must.

Magistrate

If I refuse?

Lysistrata

I'd like that!

Magistrate

Dare you speak of war and peace?

Lysistrata

Yes.

Magistrate

So make it fast.

Lysistrata

I'll do that.

Calm yourself.

Magistrate

It's difficult:
itchy fists.

Old Woman A.

You risk a beating.

Magistrate

Shut up, bag. *You talk.*

Lysistrata

I will.

All along we kept our silence,
acquiesced as nice wives should--
or else!--although we didn't like it.

You would escalate the war;
we would ask you so politely,
even though it hurt inside,

'Darling, what's the latest war-news?

'What did all you men decree?

Anything about a treaty?'

Then you'd say, 'What's that to you?

Shut up!' And I'd shut up.

Old Woman B

Not me!

Magistrate

Then I'd smack you!

Lysistrata

There you are.
Then we'd hear some even worse news,
so we'd say, 'How stupid, dear!'
Then you'd give us dirty looks and
say, 'Go mend my pants or else!'⁴
War is strictly for the menfolk.'

Magistrate

Right we were.

Lysistrata

You stupid fool!
We were quite prepared to warn you;
you refused to hear advice.
Then disaster. Throughout the city
'All our boys are gone!' you cried.
That's when all the wives decided
we must act to save the Greeks.
Thus we're here: no point in waiting.
Want to hear some good advice?
Shut your mouth the way we used to,
let us save you from yourselves.

Magistrate

You save us? That's madness!

Lysistrata

Shut up!

Magistrate

Me shut up for you? You skirt!
Let me die before that happens!

Lysistrata

It's my skirt that bothers you?
Give the man a skirt and bonnet:
Maybe that will shut him up.

Old Woman C

Here's a sewing basket also!

Lysistrata

Now he needs some chewing gum.
Put a little lipstick on him,
stuff your hankies down his shirt.
War is strictly for the women!

Women's Leader

Women arise, let go your jars.
It's time to help these friends of ours.

Women's Chorus

I'm dancing forever, I'll never retreat,
never be tired or get cold feet!
I'm ready to strive
for the cause of the wives,
who are decent, smart,
patriotic, bold of heart!

Leader

Most valiant child of bold fore-mothers,
no slow-down or retreat!
You've got him where you want him now:
you're in the driver's seat!

Lysistrata

Goddess of sex and sweet desire,
breathe upon our breasts and flanks,
give our husbands lasting hard-ons,
help us make them leave the ranks.

Magistrate

What's your plan?

Lysistrata

My first requirement:
soldiers leave the marketplace.

Old Woman A

Hear, hear!

Lysistrata

They strut about in armor,
pushing shoppers, smashing goods.

Magistrate

Manly men!

Lysistrata

But pretty comic,
stacking burgers on their shields.

Old Woman B

God, I've seen those grand lieutenants
use their helmets for a bowl.
Mercenaries slap the salesgirls,
never even pay their bill!

Magistrate

You can stop these wartime hardships,
I'm to gather?

Lysistrata

Sure!

Magistrate

And how?

Lysistrata

Open up your sewing basket:
see the skein of tangled wool?
Put it to the spindle this way,
wind it here, now wind it there.
Thus the war can be unravelled,
making truces here, and there.

Magistrate

Skeins and spindles? I don't get it.

Lysistrata

Sense and skill is all you need.

Magistrate

Show me.

Lysistrata

Gladly. First you wash the
city as we wash the wool,
cleaning out the bullshit. Then we
pluck away the parasites;
break up strands that clump together,
forming special interest groups;
Here's a bozo: squeeze his head off.
Now you're set to card the wool:
use your basket for the carding,
the basket of solidarity.
There we put our migrant workers,
foreign friends, minorities,
immigrants and wage-slaves, every
person useful to the state.
Don't forget our allies, either,
languishing like separate strands.
Bring it all together now, and
make one giant ball of yarn.
Now you're ready: weave a brand new
suit for all the citizens.

Magistrate

War is not the same as wool-balls!
What do women know of war?

Lysistrata

Even more than you do, asshole.
First of all we make the children,
Then we send them off to war, then--

Magistrate

That's enough! I take your point.

Lysistrata

What about young wives? They waste their
prime of life in solitude.
What about the girls who'll grow old
long before they find a man?

Magistrate

Men get old too.

Lysistrata

That's quite different.
Men can always get a girl,
even greybeards. Girls don't have that
luxury. Their time is short.
Men won't marry older girls: they pine away in spinsterhood.

Magistrate

Lucky men! For us it's easy:
all we need is in our pants!

Lysistrata

Time for you to die, old geezer.
Fetch your coffin. Here's a grave-site.
We'll arrange the funeral.
Put a lily in his hand.

Old Woman C

Here's a wreath.

Old Woman A

And here's a bible.

Lysistrata

What are you waiting for? You're dead!
Off to the big bureaucracy in the sky.
You're holding up St. Peter.

Magistrate

You haven't heard the last of this. Outrageous!
By god, I'll show the other magistrates
exactly what you've done to me. So there!

Lysistrata

I hope you won't complain about your funeral.
We did our best. I tell you what: we'll hold
a proper service at your grave: a dance!

Men's Chorus

Leader

Wake up men, defend our manhood!
Strip for action! Dance away!

Chorus

There's more to this outbreak
than you might guess:
we're sure that these women
are terrorists! The Spartans have managed
to infiltrate
our houses and women:
and next the state!
The citadel-seizure
we understand:
They're putting an end to
our pension plan!

Leader

Outrageous that these women dare to prate
of war and peace and governing the state!
And then they tell us we should make a deal
with commies, who are slipprier than an eel!
It's nothing but a plan for tyranny.
While I'm alive they won't do that to me.
I'll fight these women with my dying breath.
For I say, Give me liberty or give me death!
I'm standing tall, a loyal patriot:
if you don't like it I'll kick you in the butt!

Women's Chorus

Leader

You'll soon be running home to mommy.
Strip for action, girls, and dance!

Chorus

A debt to our country
we must repay:
so we've good advice for
you all today.
we're healthy and happy
and well-to-do,
and all our successes

we owe to you.
Our schools and our temples, our social lives:
they all helped to make us
your perfect wives.

Leader of Women's Chorus

With good advice we want to pay you back.
Don't worry that it comes from Jill not Jack.
Consider it on its merits. Anyway,
we bear the children and deserve our say.
What contribution do these old men make?
They never seem to give, but only take.
We pay for all their laws, their wars, their theft.
And they'll keep taking till there's nothing left.
Old men, I warn you: better hold your peace.
You make a sound, we'll kick you in the teeth!

Men's Chorus

I've seen a lot of arrogance,
but this outdoes it all.
We've got to beat them down to size
if we've still got the balls.

Leader

Take your shirts off, you're not tacos!
Let them whiff your manly smell!

Chorus

We once were Athenian raiders,
we dealt mercilessly with traitors.
Let'd do it again,
pretend we're young men,
not washed-up old alligators!

Leader of Men's Chorus

We can't afford to let them get the jump,
for women are a match for any hump.
They might build submarines and strike below:
we wouldn't know just when to expect the blow.
We'd hate to face equestrian encounters,
for women are indomitable mounters.
You'll never shake them off once they get on:
just look at pictures of the Amazons!²
We must move now to make their plot a wreck,
so let's move out and grab them by the neck!

Women's Chorus

Go on and get our fire going,
and pull the bitch's tail!
Then all your buddies get to hear
how loud you weep and wail.

Leader

Take your skirts off, don't be modest!
Let them whiff an angry sow!

Chorus

We wait for the note of your clarion,
you nattering octogenarian!
Just give us a chance
to pull down your pants
and deliver your balls by caesarean.

Leader of Women's Chorus

And anyway your efforts are for naught?
the wives are carrying out a foolproof plot.
Pass all the laws you want and call for war:
the decent folks will only hate you more.
Just yesterday I had a picnic planned
for a lovely visitor from a foreign land,
in fact a pot of Theban caviar!
But nothing doing: that's against your law.
You'll keep on regulating us, no doubt,
till someone picks you up and throws you out.

Women's Chorus

Hail, leader of our common enterprise!
But why emerge? How come you look so sad?

Lysistrata

The wives reveal their baseness and grow weak.
It's got me down, I don't know what to do.

Leader

What's that you say?

Lysistrata

It's true, it's true.

Leader

Let's hear it all: we're friends that you can trust.

Lysistrata

A shame to speak but risky to keep quiet.

Leader

Don't hide a crisis that affects us all!

Lysistrata

I'll make it short: they're dying to get laid.

Leader

Oh gods!

Lysistrata

I doubt the gods can get us out of this.
I certainly can't keep on withholding wives
from husbands: they're determined to escape.
I caught one by that grotto with a shovel,
scraping away and widening her hole
Another one was climbing on that pulley,
pulling herself off. And another one
got on a giant bird, said 'take me to
a whorehouse!'¹ Luckily I grabbed her hair.
And every excuse for going home there is,
they make. I think that's one of them right now.
Hey you, where to?

Wife A

I've got to run back home.
My bolts of woolen cloth, the finest kind,
are very much in need of moth-balls.

Lysistrata

Moth-balls?
Get back in there!

Wife A

I swear I'll come right back.
Just let me spread my wool out on the bed.

Lysistrata

You won't be spreading anything, nor be leaving.

Wife A

But then my wool will go to waste!

Lysistrata

So be it.

Wife B

Oh stupid me, forgetting to tenderize
the meat. I've got to go and beat it.

Lysistrata

Here's
another who forgot to beat her meat.
Get back inside!

Wife B

I swear I'll be right back.
Just let me roll it in my hands a bit.

Lysistrata

No! Keep your hands to yourself. If you do *this*,
then all the wives will want to do the same.

Wife C

O Goddess of Labor, hold my pains a while,
till I can get to a proper birthing place!

Lysistrata

What's all this yelling?

Wife C

I'm having a baby now!

Lysistrata

But yesterday you were skinny.

Wife C

Not today.
I've got to see the doctor, dear Lysistrata:
please send me home.

Lysistrata

Let's have a look at you.
What's this? It sounds like metal.

Wife C

It's a boy!

Lysistrata

I'd swear you've got some hollow metal thing
beneath your dress. Let's pull it up and see.
You card! You've still got Athena's helmet there!
Are you still pregnant?

Wife C

Yes indeed I am.

Lysistrata

Then what's the helmet for?

Wife C

In case the baby
comes while I'm here. Then I'd deliver it
into the helmet, like a nesting bird.

Lysistrata

Preposterous, an obvious excuse.
You'll have to exercise the nesting option.

Wife C

I can't get any sleep here on the citadel,
not since I saw the Goddess' sacred snake!

Wife D

I can't sleep either. I toss and turn all night,
what with the hooting of the sacred owls.

ysistrata

Enough! I won't hear any more excuses!
You miss your husbands, fine, But don't you know
they miss you too? I'm sure the nights they spend
are miserably lonely. Please hold out,
please bear with it a little while long.
I've got a prophecy here predicting victory,²
provided we stay together. Want to hear it?

Wife A

Let's hear the prophecy.

Lysistrata

Be quiet then.
Yea, when the birds shall hole up in a single place,
fleeing the eagles and keeping themselves quite chaste,
then shall their problems be solved, they'll be on top,
so says the King of the Gods--

Wife B

We'll be on top?

Lysistrata

But: if the birds start to argue and fly away
down from the citadel holy, all will say:
no bird more disgusting and shameless lives today!

Wife A

A pretty explicit prophecy. My god!

Lysistrata

So let's hear no more talk of backing out.
We'll all go back inside, for what a shame,
dear friends, if we betray the prophecy.

Men's Chorus

I want to tell you all a tale.
I heard it as a lad.
Once there was a man called Black,
who lived as a nomad.
A faithful dog his company,
he hunted and he roamed,
he made his nets and set his traps

but never would go home.
Because he hated women so,
and that's where he was wise.
We follow Black's example in
that women we despise!

Men's Leader

How about a kiss, old ghoul?

Women's Leader

Wash your mouth out first, you fool!

Men's Leader

I've got something for you here.

Women's Leader

All I see is pubic hair.

Men's Leader

That's right, I'm bushy down below.
But manly men are always so!
Whenever I display my buns,
the enemy drops his spear and runs!

Women's Chorus

Our hero answers all your tales
about that other dope.
His name was Timon and he was
a total misanthrope.
He wandered in the mountains too,
and acted very mean.
If anybody crossed his path
he'd pick their carcass clean.
he couldn't stand men's evil ways,
but women he enjoyed.
We too stand up for principles,
of which you are devoid.

Women's Leader

You want me to re-do your nose?.

Men's Leader

No way, it doesn't need your blows.

Women's Leader

So what about a stomping, then?

Men's Leader

Your bush resembles a pig-pen.

Women's Leader

You liar! That's a blatant slander!
Just go ahead and take a gander:
my hair may be as white as snow,
but I keep myself well-groomed below.

Lysistrata

Hey, women, women, come and take a look!
Come quick!

Wife

What's happening? What's the fuss about?

Lysistrata

A man is coming. By the look of him
he's suffering from satyriasis.
O Goddess of Love and Pangs of Sweet Desire,
make this man's journey straight and very upright!

Wife

Where is he, whoever it is?

Lysistrata

He's by that cave.

Wife

I see him now! Who is he?

Lysistrata

Anyone know?

Myrrhine

Oh god, I do! That's my own husband, Rod!

Lysistrata

You've got to light his fire, get him hot,
do everything that turns him on, except
the thing you're under oath not to. OK?

Myrrhine

Don't worry, I can do it.

Lysistrata

Very well.
While you get ready I'll try to get *him* ready
and warm him up a bit. Now out of sight!

Rod

O woe is me! I've got a terrible cramp!
It's like I'm being broken on the rack!

Lysistrata

Who enters our defense perimeter?

Rod

Me.

Lysistrata

A man?

Rod

Just look!

Lysistrata

In that case please depart.

Rod

Who's telling me to leave?

Lysistrata

The daytime guard.

Rod

I've come for Myrrhine. Tell her that I'm here!

Lysistrata

You give me orders? Who do you think you are?

Rod

Her husband, Rodney Balling, from Bangtown.

Lysistrata

A lovely name! You know, we consider it
our very favorite topic of conversation.
Your wife has little else upon her lips.
She'll eat bananas, or a peanut, sighing,
'If only this were really Balling!'

Rod

God!

Lysistrata

Yes sir! And any time the conversation turns
to men, your wife speaks up forthwith and says,
'Compared to Balling, nothing else exists!'

Rod

Please, call her out!

Lysistrata

Got anything for me?

Rod

Indeed I do. You're very welcome, too.
What's mine is yours. How's this? It's what I've got.

Lysistrata

I think I'll call your wife. Hold on.

Rod

Be quick!
I have no joy or pleasure in my life
since Myrrhine has departed from my house.
I open up the door and start to cry,
it looks so empty! Then I try to eat,
but I can hardly taste the food. I'm horny!

Myrrhine

I love him dearly, but he doesn't want
to love me back! Don't make me see him! Please!

Rod

Oh Pussikins, my darling, what's the matter?
Come down here!

Myrrhine

I'm not coming anywhere!

Rod

You won't obey me when I say to come?

Myrrhine

I fail to see a reason for your summons.

Rod

A reason? Don't you see what shape I'm in?

Myrrhine

Goodbye.

Rod

No, wait! Perhaps you'll want to hear
from Junior. Come on, yell for mommy, kid.

Baby

Mommy! Mommy! Mommy!

Rod

Well, what's the matter? Don't you pity him?
You know he's been six days without your breasts!

Myrrhine

I feel for Junior, but it's very clear
you don't.

Rod

Get down here, woman, see your child!

Myrrhine

O motherhood, what a drag! I'll be right down.

Rod

She seems much sexier and even younger
than I remember. Very tasty looking!
She acted tough, and very haughty too,
but that just makes me want her even more!

Myrrhine

Poor sweetie pie! With such a lousy father.
I'll kiss and cuddle you, my darling child.

Rod

The hell you think you're doing,
listening to those women?
You only piss me off
and hurt yourself as well.

Myrrhine

Don't lay your hands on me!

Rod

You know our home's an utter mess. You just
let everything go.

Myrrhine

It doesn't bother me.

Rod

It doesn't bother you that all your clothes
were dragged away by chickens?

Myrrhine

Not at all.

Rod

And worse, your sacred duty as my mate
has been neglected! Thus you must return.

Myrrhine

I'm going nowhere till you swear on oath
to vote to end the war.

Rod

I'll maybe do that,
if it's appropriate.

Myrrhine

Then maybe I'll go home,
if it's appropriate. But now I'm sworn to stay.

Rod

OK, at least lie down with me awhile.

Myrrhine

I won't. But I don't say I wouldn't like to.

Rod

You would? Then why not do it, pussy mine?

Myrrhine

Oh really, Rod, in front of Junior here?

Rod

Of course not. Nurse, take Junior home at once.
All right, the kid's no longer in our way.
Let's do it!

Myrrhine

Do it where, you silly man?
It's public here!

Rod

You're right. Hey, there's a cave.

Myrrhine

I must be pure to re-enter the citadel.

Rod

Then purify yourself in the sacred spring there.

Myrrhine

But what about my oath? I won't be perjured.

Rod

A woman's oath means nothing. I'm not worried.

Myrrhine

Well, let me get a bed.

Rod

But I don't need one:
the ground's OK by me.

Myrrhine

I wouldn't dream
of making you lie there (though you deserve it).

Rod

She really loves me, that's quite obvious.

Myrrhine

Your bed, sir. Lie right down, I'll tuck you in.
But I forgot, what is it, yes, a mattress.

Rod

A mattress? None for me, thanks.

Myrrhine

I'm uncomfortable
on box-springs.

Rod

Give me just a little kiss?

Myrrhine

OK.

Rod

Oh lordy! Get the mattress quick!

Myrrhine

And here it is. Stay down while I undress.
But I forget, what is it, yes, a pillow.

Rod

But I'm all set, I need no pillow

Myrrhine

I do.

Rod

It's like a restaurant where they serve no food.

Myrrhine

Lift up, now, up. Well, now I think I'm set.

Rod

I know I am! Come here to papa, darling!

Myrrhine

I'm taking off my bra. But don't forget,
don't lie to me about your vote for peace.

Rod

May lightning strike me!

Myrrhine

You don't have a blanket.

Rod

It's not a blanket I want! I want to get fucked!

Myrrhine

That's just what's going to happen. Back in a flash.

Rod

That woman drives me nuts with all her bedding.

Myrrhine

Get up now.

Rod

But I've already got it up!

Myrrhine

You want some perfume?

Rod

Thank you, no, I don't

Myrrhine

But I do, if it's all the same to you.

Rod

Then get the goddamned perfume. Jesus Christ!

Myrrhine

Hold out your hand. And save a bit for me.

Rod

I don't like perfume as a general rule,
unless it smells like love is in the air.

Myrrhine

Oh silly me, I must have brought Brand X.

Rod

No, wait, I like it!

Myrrhine

You're just being polite.

Rod

God damn the guy who first invented perfume!

Myrrhine

I found some good stuff. Here's the tube.

Rod

Here's mine!
Come on now, let's lie down, there's nothing more
to fetch.

Myrrhine

You're right, I will, I'll be right there.
I'm taking off my shoes. Remember, dear,
your promise to vote for peace.

Rod

I surely will.
Where are you? Myrrhine? Myrrhine! Where's my Myrrhine?
She pumped me up and dropped me flat. I'm ruined!

Rod and Myrrhine

Duet
What'll I do?
No one to screw!
I've lost the sexiest girl I knew.
My cock is an orphan,
it couldn't be worse.
I'll just have to get him
a practical nurse.

Men's Leader

Frightful deceit! Pity on you!
We cannot imagine what to do.
What balls can endure
being treated this way,
without any chance of
an actual lay?

Rod

Oh god, the cramps attack anew!

Leader

A dirty bitch did this to you!

Rod

Oh no, she's really sweet and kind.

Leader

That bitch? You must have lost your mind!

Rod

You're right, a bitch
is what she is!
I'll put a curse
upon that miz!
I pray for a tornado,
with lightning bolts and all,
to lift her into heaven
and then to let her fall.
Way down and down she's falling,
above a giant rock.
And when she's almost on it,
I pray she hits my cock!

Spartan Herald

Direct me, please, to party headquarters.
Where are your commissars? You please will speak.

Rod

The hell are you? A man or a Freudian nightmare?

Spartan Herald

I'm Herald from Sparta, you very cute young man.²
I come with orders to propose a treaty.

Rod

That's why you've got that tommy-gun in there?

Spartan Herald

Is not a weapon.

Rod

Turn around, let's see.
What's pushing out your trousers? What's in there,
your lunch-box?

Spartan Herald

This young man is obviously intoxicated.

Rod

That's a hard-on, rogue!

Spartan Herald

Do not be silly, please: is no such thing.

Rod

Then what do you call that?

Spartan Herald

Is my attache case.

Rod

If that's the case, then I've got one just like it.
But let's come clean, OK? I know what's up.
How fare you all in happy Sparta, sir?

Spartan Herald

Not well. The comrades rise,
also the allies.
We all have hard-on.
Have a pussy shortage.

Rod

What's wrong?
Some difficulty with your five year plan?

Spartan Herald

Oh no, was dissidents. Was Lampito.
She lead the women comrades in a plot.
They take an oath of solidarity,
keep men away from warm and furry place.

Rod

What happened?

Spartan Herald

Now we suffer! Walk around
like men with hernia problem, all bent over.
The women won't permit to touch the pussy,
till each and every party member swear
to make bilateral disarmament.

Rod

So this is global, a vast conspiracy
devised by women! Now I see it all!
Go quickly back to Sparta for the truce.
Arrange to send ambassadors with full powers.
And I will so instruct our leaders here,
to name ambassadors. I'll show them this!

Spartan Herald

I fly away. You offer good advice.

Choral dialogue

Men's Leader

No animal exists more stubborn than a woman.
Not even fire, nor any panther, is quite as shameless.

Women's Leader

You seem to understand this, but still you keep on fighting.
It's possible, bad man, to have our lasting friendship.

Men's Leader

I'll never cease to loathe the female sex!

Women's Leader

That's up to you, I guess. But meanwhile I don't like
this sight of you undressed. Just look at you, how silly!
I simply must come over and put your shirt back on.

Men's Leader

By god, I'd have to say that's no bad thing you did.
And now I'm sorry I took it off before, in anger.

Women's Leader

And now you look like a man again, and not so comic.
And if you hadn't been so hostile, I'd have removed
that bug in your eye, which I can see is still in there.

Men's Leader

So that's what's been rubbing me the wrong way. Here's my ring.
Please dig it out of my eye, and then I want to see it.
By god, that thing's been biting at my eye a long time.

Women's Leader

You're very welcome. Stand still! What a grumpy man!
Great gods, it's huge thing, a genuinely king-sized gnat.
And there it comes. Look at it. Isn't it Brobdingnagian?

Men's Leader

You've helped me out a lot. That thing's been digging wells.
And now that it's removed, my eyes are streaming tears.

Women's Leader

There, there, you naughty man, I'll wipe your tears away,
and kiss you.

Men's Leader

I don't want a kiss!

Women's Leader

I'll kiss you anyway!

Men's Leader

You got me, damn you. Women know how to get what they want.
That ancient adage puts it well and sums it up:
women are bad, you can't live with 'em, you can't live without 'em.
But now let's have a truce. We promise never again
to flout you; and you promise never again to hit us.
So now let's get together and sing a happy song!

Chorus

No citizen need fear from us
the slightest castigation.
In recent times we've had our fill
of trial and tribulation.
Instead, if any man and wife
should need some extra dough,
we'll gladly let you have what's in
our piggy banks at home.
And when the war is over with
don't bother to repay,
for what we have to loan you now
is nothing anyway.

Chorus

Tomorrow night we'll have a feast,
a real celebrity ball.
We'll roast a pig and make some soup:
we'll have enough for all.
So get up early, bathe the kids,]
and bathe yourselves as well.
Then come on over, walk right in:
you needn't ring the bell.
Then straight on to the dining room,
as if it were your own.
We'll treat you just as you'd treat us:
there'll be nobody home.

Chorus Leader

Here they come, ambassadors from
Sparta. Look, I see their beards.
What's around their waists? They might be
wearing pig-pens under there.
Ambassadors from Sparta, first: our greetings.
Then tell us, please, what seems to be the matter?

Spartan Ambassador

No use to waste a lot of time describing.
Is best to show condition we are in.

Leader

Oh my! Your problem's big and very hard.
It looks to me like runaway inflation.

Spartan Ambassador

Unspeakable. What can one say? We wish
to talk of peace on any reasonable terms.

Leader

And now I see our own ambassadors.
They look like wrestlers hunkered down like that.
Their pants appear to walk ahead of them.
They suffer from a dislocated boner.

Athenian Ambassador

Can anyone direct me to Lysistrata?
It's obvious we need to find her fast.

Leader

Their syndrome seems to be the same as theirs.
These spasms: are they worse in the wee hours?

Athenian Ambassador

They're always bad and getting even badder!
Unless we get a treaty pretty quick,
we'll have to start resorting to each other!¹

Leader

You'll cover up, if you've got any sense.
Some fundamentalist² might chop it off.

Athenian Ambassador

Oh Christ, good thinking.

Spartan Ambassador

Da, is very straight
advice. Come on, let's pull the trousers up.

Athenian Ambassador

So: greetings, Spartans. Shameful situation!

Spartan Ambassador

Da, comrade, terrible, but would be worse,
if decadent religious ones had seen us.

Athenian Ambassador

All right then, Spartans, time to play our cards.
The reason for your visit?

Spartan Ambassador

Negotiation
for peace.

Athenian Ambassador

That's very good. We want the same
So now we've got to call Lysistrata,
for she alone can be our arbitrator.

Spartan Ambassador

Lysistratos, Lysistrata, whoever.

Athenian Ambassador

It doesn't look as if we need to call her.
She must have heard us: here she comes herself

Leader

Hail the bravest of all women!
Now you must be more besides:
Firm but soft, high-class but low-brow,
Strict but lenient, versatile.
Delegates from every city,
captured by your potent charms,
Come before you and request your
arbitration of their cause.

Lysistrata

My task will not be difficult, since they're all
aroused and not at one another's throats.
How ripe are they? Where's Reconciliation?
Take hold of the Spartans first, and bring them here.
Be gentle with your hand and don't pull hard,
don't grab and yank the way men handle women,
but use a woman's touch, like home sweet home.
They won't extend a hand? Go farther down.
Now do the same for our Athenians.
Whatever they extend, take hold of that.
Now, men of Sparta, stand here on my left,
and you stand on my right. Both parties listen.
I'm female, yes, but still I've got a brain.
I'm not so badly off for judgment, either.
My father and some other elders, too,
have given me a first-rate education.
In no uncertain terms I must reproach you,²
both sides, and rightly. Don't you share a cup
at common altars, for common gods, like brothers,
at the Olympic games, Thermophylai and Delphi?
I needn't list the many, many others.
The world is full of foreigners you could fight,
but it's Greek men and cities you destroy!
And that's the first reproach I have for you.

Athenian Ambassador

My hard-on's absolutely killing me!

Lysistrata

Now, Spartans, my next reproach is aimed at you.
You must remember, not so long ago,
you sent a man to Athens begging us,
on bended knee and whiter than a ghost,
to send an army? All your slaves were up
in arms when that big earthquake hit you.
We sent you help, four thousand infantry,
a force that saved your entire country for you.
And now you pay the Athenians back by ravaging
their country, after all they did for yours?

Athenian Ambassador

That's right, Lysistrata, they're in the wrong!

Spartan Ambassador

We're wrong: but take a look at that sweet ass!

Lysistrata

Do you Athenians think I'll let you off?
You must remember, not so long ago,
when you wore rags, oppressed by tyranny,
and Spartans routed the army of occupation,
destroying the tyrant's men and all his allies,
and drove them out on a single glorious day,
and set you free, and then replaced your rags
with clothes befitting democratic people?

Spartan Ambassador

I never saw so well-endowed a woman!

Athenian Ambassador

I never saw a better-looking pussy!

Lysistrata

Considering all these mutual benefactions,
why prosecute the war and make more trouble?
Why not make peace? What keeps you still apart?

Spartan Ambassador

We must demand this promontory here
return to us.

Lysistrata

Which one?

Spartan Ambassador

This one in back:
we count on having, we can almost feel it.

Athenian Ambassador

By the God of Earthquakes, that you'll never get!

Lysistrata

You'll give it up, sir.

Athenian Ambassador

What do *we* get, then?

Lysistrata

You'll ask for something that's of equal value.

Athenian Ambassador

Let's see now, I know, give us first of all
the furry triangle here, the gulf that runs
behind it, also the two connecting legs.

Spartan Ambassador

My dear ambassador, you want it all!

Lysistrata

You'll give it. Don't be squabbling over legs.

Athenian Ambassador

I'm set to strip and do a little ploughing!

Spartan Ambassador

Me first: before one ploughs one spreads manure!

Lysistrata

When peace is made you'll both do all you want.
For now, are all these items to your liking?
If so you'd best confer with all your allies.

Athenian Ambassador

Confer with allies? Too hard up for that.
They'll go alone with us. I'm sure they're just
as anxious to start fucking.

Spartan Ambassador

Also ours,
is certain.

Athenian Ambassador

Every Greek is fond of fucking.

Lysistrata

You argue well. And now for ratification.
The women on the citadel will host
the banquet, for we brought our picnic boxes.
You'll swear your oaths and make your pledges there.
And then let everybody take his wife
and go on home.

Athenian Ambassador

What are we waiting for?

Spartan Ambassador

Please, lead the way.

Athenian Ambassador

You'd best start running them!

Chorus

Fine gowns, embroidered shawls, kid gloves,
and lots of golden rings:
if you've a debutante at home,
you needn't buy these things.
We've got a closet in the house,
we've got a jewelry box.
They're neither of them sealed so tight
we couldn't pick the locks.
So come around, feel free to take
whatever you can find.
You won't find much unless you have
a sharper eye than mine.

Chorus

All those with many mouths to feed
but nothing to provide:
we bought a peck of wheat and made
some bread to put aside.
So anyone who's poor can bring
a basket or a tray .
We've told our slaves to fetch the bread
and give it all away.
One thing we should have told you first:
you can't get near the door.
We've got a giant doberman
who doesn't like the poor.

Athenian Ambassador

Open up the gate you!
Should have got out of my way!
You slaves, quit loafing. How'd you like your hair
burned off? Slave-beating: what a stale routing!
Director, I won't do it. Ask the audience?
All right, to please you I'll go through with it.

Athenian

We're right behind you, glad to help you out.
Get lost, you slaves! Your hair's in serious danger!

Athenian Ambassador

Get lost: we'd like the Spartans to depart
from their banquet without stumbling over you.

Athenian

I've never seen a banquet quite like this.
The Spartans were delightful company.
And we were pretty clever over drinks.

Athenian Ambassador

That's right. You can't be clever when you're sober.
I'm going to propose new legislation,
that diplomats conduct their business drunk.
As things now stand, we go to Sparta sober,
then look for ways to stir up lots of trouble.
And so whatever they say we never hear it,
but hunt for hidden meaning in what they don't say,

and then make contradictory reports.
But now we're straightened out. If someone made
a toast to workers rather than to profits,²
we cheered him anyway and raised our glasses.
What's this? Those slaves are coming back again.
We told you: bugger off, you whipping posts!

Athenian

That's right: The Spartans are emerging now.

Spartan Ambassador

Comrade musician, ready the balalaika.
For now I dance and sing a happy song
to honor jointly both our superpowers.

Athenian Ambassador

A splendid treat: some balalaika music!
I love to see you Spartans sing and dance.

Spartan Ambassador

Holy Memory, reveal
the glories of yore:
how Spartans and Athenians
won the Persian war.
Athens met them on the sea,
and Sparta held the land,
although the Persian forces were
more numerous than sand.
All the gods that helped us then,
we bid you visit us again,
to help us celebrate our peace
and see that it will never cease.
Now let mutual friendship reign,
never fighting a war again.
Put a stop to competition,
end all mutual suspicion.
Hear us, gods, loud and clear.
Witness what we promise here.

Athenian Ambassador

Well, now that everything has turned out well,¹
reclaim your wives here, Spartans. These are yours,
Athenians. Every husband join his wife,
and wife her husband. Then let's have a dance

and ask the gods to bless us, promising
never again to make the same mistakes.

Chorus

Form up the dance, the Graces call,
summon Apollo, who heals us all,
Artemis his twin sister too,
Bacchus with his maenad crew,
Father Zeus with lightning crowned,
Hera, Zeus' wife renowned.
Summon every force above,
join us in our dance of love,
peace and freedom are at hand,
thanks to Aphrodite's plan!
What can we say?
Hurray, horray!
We also pray
you liked the play!

Ambassador

Hey Spartan, what about another song?

Spartan Ambassador

To Sparta, Muse, my song will roam,
where Apollo has his southern home,
where Athena's house has brazen portals,
where Zeus' twin sons, knights immortal,
gallop by Eurotas River,
setting Spartan hearts aquiver,
where heavenly dancers leap and shout,
like colts the maidens frisk about,
raising dust, tossing their manes,
possessed by Bacchus, all insane,
led by Zeus' holy child,
Helen, women's nonpareil.
Hold your hair up with your hand,
beat your feet throughout the land,
help the dancers make some noise,
sing a song of joyous praise
for Athena of Athens, for Spartan Athena
of the House of Bronze!