

LYSISTRATA: Our country's fate is henceforth in our hands:

To destroy the Peloponnesians root and branch—

CALONICE: What could be nobler!

LYSISTRATA: Wipe out the Boeotians—

CALONICE: Not utterly. Have mercy on the eels!¹

LYSISTRATA: But with regard to Athens, note I'm careful

Not to say any of these nasty things;

Still, thought is free. . . But if the women join us

From Peloponnesus and Boeotia, then

Hand in hand we'll rescue Greece.

CALONICE: How could we do

Such a big wise deed? We women who dwell

Quietly adorning ourselves in a back-room

With gowns of lucid gold and gawdy toilets

Of stately silk and dainty little slippers. . .

LYSISTRATA: These are the very armaments of the rescue.

These crocus-gowns, this outlay of the best myrrh,

Slippers, cosmetics dusting beauty, and robes

With rippling creases of light.

CALONICE: Yes, but how?

LYSISTRATA: No man will lift a lance against another—

CALONICE: I'll run to have my tunic dyed crocus.

LYSISTRATA: Or take a shield—

CALONICE: I'll get a stately gown.

LYSISTRATA: Or unscabbard a sword—

CALONICE: Let me buy a pair of slipper.

LYSISTRATA: Now, tell me, are the women right to lag?

CALONICE: They should have turned birds, they should have grown
wings and flown.

LYSISTRATA: My friend, you'll see that they are true Athenians:

Always too late. Why, there's not a woman

From the shoreward demes arrived, not one from Salamis.

CALONICE: I know for certain they awoke at dawn,

And got their husbands up if not their boat sails.

LYSISTRATA: And I'd have staked my life the Acharnian dames

Would be here first, yet they haven't come either!

1. The Boeotian eels were highly esteemed delicacies in Athens.

CALONICE: Well anyhow there is Theagenes' wife
We can expect—she consulted Hecate.
But look, here are some at last, and more behind them.
See. . . where are they from?

CALONICE: From Anagyræ they come.

LYSISTRATA: Yes, they generally manage to come first.

Enter MYRRHINE.

MYRRHINE: Are we late, Lysistrata? . . . What is that?

Nothing to say?

LYSISTRATA: I've not much to say for you,

Myrrhine, dawdling on so vast an affair.

MYRRHINE: I couldn't find my girdle in the dark.

But if the affair's so wonderful, tell us, what is it?

LYSISTRATA: No, let us stay a little longer till

The Peloponnesian girls and the girls of Boeotia

Are here to listen.

MYRRHINE: That's the best advice.

Ah, there comes Lampito.

Enter LAMPITO.

LYSISTRATA: Welcome Lampito!

Dear Spartan girl with a delightful face,

Washed with the rosy spring, how fresh you look

In the easy stride of your sleek slenderness,

Why you could strangle a bull!

LAMPITO: I think I could.

It's frae exercise and kicking high behind.²

LYSISTRATA: What lovely breasts to own!

LAMPITO: Oo. . . your fingers

Assess them, ye tickler, wi' such tender chucks

I feel as if I were an altar-victim.

LYSISTRATA: Who is this youngster?

LAMPITO: A Boeotian lady.

LYSISTRATA: There never was much undergrowth in Boeotia,

Such a smooth place, and this girl takes after it.

CALONICE: Yes, I never saw a skin so primly kept.

2. The translator has put the speech of the Spartan characters in Scotch dialect which is related to English about as was the Spartan dialect to the speech of Athens. The Spartans, in their character, anticipated the shrewd, canny, uncouth Scotch highlander of modern times.

LYSISTRATA: This girl?
 LAMPITO: A sonsie open-looking jinker!
 She's a Corinthian.
 LYSISTRATA: Yes, isn't she
 Very open, in some ways particularly.
 LAMPITO: But who's garred this Council o' Women to meet
 here?
 LYSISTRATA: I have.
 LAMPITO: Propound then what you want o' us.
 MYRRHINE: What is the amazing news you have to tell?
 LYSISTRATA: I'll tell you, but first answer one small question.
 MYRRHINE: As you like.
 LYSISTRATA: Are you not sad your children's fathers
 Go endlessly off soldiering afar
 In this plodding war? I am willing to wager
 There's not one here whose husband is at home.
 CALONICE: Mine's been in Thrace, keeping an eye on Eucrates
 For five months past.
 MYRRHINE: And mine left me for Pylos
 Seven months ago at least.
 LAMPITO: And as for mine
 No sooner has he slipped out frae the line
 He straps his shield and he's snickt off again.
 LYSISTRATA: And not the slightest glitter of a lover!
 And since the Milesians betrayed us, I've not seen
 The image of a single upright man
 To be a marble consolation to us.
 Now will you help me, if I find a means
 To stamp the war out.
 MYRRHINE: By the two Goddesses, Yes!
 I will though I've to pawn this very dress
 And drink the barter-money the same day.
 CALONICE: And I too though I'm split up like a turbot
 And half is hackt off as the price of peace.
 LAMPITO: And I too! Why, to get a peep at the shy thing
 I'd clamber up to the tip-top o' Taygetus.
 LYSISTRATA: Then I'll expose my mighty mystery.
 O women, if we would compel the men
 To bow to Peace, we must refrain—