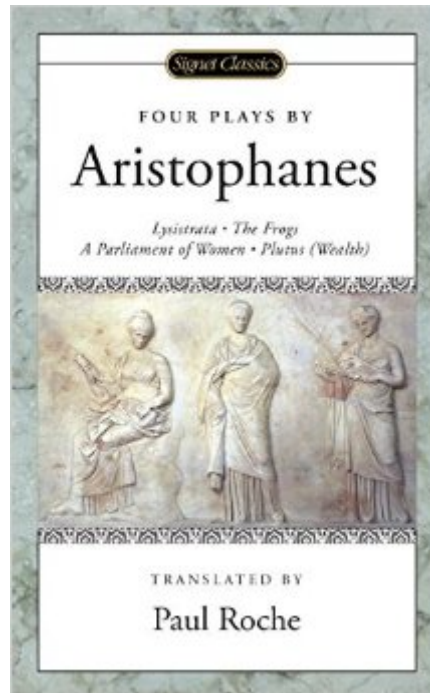


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Four Plays By Aristophanes: Lysistrata, The Frogs, A Parliament Of Women, Plutus (Wealth)



Synopsis

Whether his target is the war between the sexes or his fellow playwright Euripides, Aristophanes is the most important Greek comic dramatist and one of the greatest comic playwrights of all time. His writing at once bawdy and delicate brilliantly fuses serious political satire with pyrotechnical bombast, establishing the tradition of comedy as high art. His messages are as timely and relevant today as they were in ancient Greece, and his plays still provoke laughter and thought. This volume features four celebrated masterpieces: *Lysistrata*, *The Frogs*, *A Parliament of Women* and *Plutus* (Wealth), all translated by the distinguished poet and translator Paul Roche.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Irresponsible Trash
This review is for the 'Readaclassic dot com' edition, which is what you're buying if you're visiting this product page. Note that the other reviews linked for this product are for different student editions, which are presumably legitimate. Don't suffer the same fate as this bleary-eyed customer. Just to be clear, Aristophanes the dramatist is fab. This edition is not.
Now, on to the review:
Essentially what you're buying here is an un-formatted, copy-pasted piece of trash with no acknowledgement of translator, nor any accompanying notes or critical readings. You get a table of contents, some margins and nightmarishly arranged plays. That's it. What do I mean by "nightmarish...ly"? I'm glad you asked. It's impossible to address all of the problems, so here's a basic rundown of why this "edition" is, in a word, crap.
1. The spacing between speakers is utterly inconsistent. While this is mostly a cosmetic issue, it's a little disturbing to see one part of the speaker text bolded and double-spaced while another, maybe only a line away, is un-bolded and

jammed up against the rest of the text. *The Clouds* commits this atrocity ad infinitum. To be fair, saying "cosmetic issue" is euphemistic in the extreme. An Italian sports car that's been run through a volcano and subsequently defecated on by a thousand furry birds has fewer cosmetic issues than this text.² In many places, multiple colons inexplicably appear behind speaker's names. The reasons for this decision (?) are baffling, unless the textual "editors" were deliberately attempting to drive readers mad. That, or they're really trying to associate what normally comes out of colons with this text. If so, "A" for effort.³

It is a difficult thing to give something you know is regarded as a classic just 3 stars. I decided to read Aristophanes, thinking that I would find him more fun and easier to read than Sophocles, as it was easier to read Sophocles than Aeschylus. And I have great admiration for translators. It is a very difficult art. And I appreciated Roche's introductions and notes, which were illuminating. And . . . I couldn't stand reading it. I can't speak for how sophisticated or interesting the word play might be in Greek and I can't appreciate what it meant at the time except that I know it was much appreciated. But, the sophomoric and sometimes just moronic writing left me so cold that the myriad mythological references, which normally delight me, meant nothing. I like slapstick. I like silly. I'd watch Lend me a Tenor again in a heartbeat. I grew up watching Woody Allen, Jerry Lewis, The Marx Bros. and Mel Brooks movies. But, the level of humor can get so low, that I can't go on (many Adam Sandler movies fit this bill). It did not help me that Roche used British dialects, like Cockney, to interpret Aristophanes. It actually kind of ruined it for me. When I read Greek classics, I don't mind if it is tough going. I want spar, ethereal, often difficult to comprehend writing. I want the ambiance to be ancient Greek, not Eliza Doolittle selling apples in Covent Gardens. Perhaps had I been an Athenian suffering through the seemingly endless war, I'd have rolled in laughter at his comedy. As a 21st century American, I couldn't even finish *Frogs*, having suffered through *Lysistrata*. I am also not able to compare him to his comedic contemporaries. Perhaps they were worse still. All I can give is my impression. Let me give an analogy.

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