

LIGHTS UP

ON OPEN *Suitable music with clip of football match and referee blowing whistle or calling time, fade down to Projection:*

***Know Your Ancient Literature Series
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DIRECTOR Scene 1, Take 11 Rolling and Action!

PRODUCER *(from production booth, announces in a sonorous tone)*
Tonight we feature **LYSISTRATA** by **Aristophanes**.
To end the Peloponnesian War, Lysistrata has called on the women of Greece to refuse their husbands sex until a peace treaty has been signed. The women rebels confront their menfolk while the older women of Athens seize the Akropolis, which houses the treasury of Athens.

(Actors over-acting, big gestures, playing up comedically)

CALONICE What is it about, dear Lysistrata, That you've called the women hither in a troop? What kind of an object is it?

LYSISTRATA A tremendous thing! *(shocked at her brazeness)*

CALONICE And long?

LYSISTRATA Indeed, it may be very lengthy, a cause of sleepless nights.

CALONICE It must be a fine thing for such long attention.
(Pauses, looking around). But why aren't the women here?

LYSISTRATA Alas, no man is attached. Otherwise they would be fluttering along ...

LYSSA CUT! CUT!

DIRECTOR You can't call cut, Lyssa. That's my job. What's wrong?

LYSSA This can't be the first vignette.

DIRECTOR You tell me this after eleven takes!

LYSSA These lines could easily be taken out of context. They could give the audience the wrong impression ...

DIRECTOR Alexandar thought it was funny.

LYSSA Yes, my opinion of Alexandar is growing by the moment.

DIRECTOR Too late. It's the approved script. More importantly, where does it say this is pantomime?

CALLIE It is meant to be dramatic.

DIRECTOR This is film not stage. Keep your gestures small and your eyes large.

PRODUCER *(bursts in)* Why did you stop filming?

CALLIE *(flicking her script at Producer, accusing).* Where are the scenes with the choruses?

PRODUCER What choruses?

CALLIE The choruses play the battle scene for the Akropolis. The older women conquer the citadel and the old men, appalled at their rebellion, attempt to trap and burn them to death.

PRODUCER Old choiristers? No one wants to see that.

LYSSA You can't cut them. They are critical to the story.

PRODUCER I can and I have. There's no budget for extras. *(to Director)* What we need is more décolletage.

LYSSA There's more to women than décolletage.

DIRECTOR Callie's point about the fire is good. Vision this: we cut in deleted scenes from Pompeii, A.I. the Akropolis in background, the women running and screaming, the men in battle frenzy.

PRODUCER *(Makes notes).* That's better! Film that.

CALLIE And very wrong! The women aren't running and screaming. They make their stand, overpower the old men and put out their fires.

LYSSA Which is the point of the play - putting out mens' fires!

CALLIE The play, **including** the choruses, was a raging success at the Lenaea Festival.

PRODUCER Great. When was that?

CALLIE 2,436 years ago.

DIRECTOR It's about immolating.

LYSSA Oh right. How does that follow from Scene One?

CALLIE It doesn't. *(Tidies hair, face and costume)*. Let's just do it.

DIRECTOR Places. Scene 7, Take 1 rolling and action

LYSISTRATA

I shall immolate the victim thus. *(imitates slitting throat then dramatically sweeps up a cup of wine)*

CALONICE

Here now! Share fair. Haven't we made a pact? Lets quaff down that friendship cup in our turn. *(fills both cups, salut, then interrupted)*. Hark, what caterwauling hubbub is that?

LYSISTRATA

At last! The women have appropriated the citadel! Raise the rebels! These others will serve as hostages.

CALONICE

Won't the men march against us?

LYSISTRATA

And what if they do? No threat shall creak our hinges wide, no torch shall light a fear in us

PRODUCER *(bursting in, frustrated)*. CUT! CUT!

DIRECTOR You can't call cut Alexandar! That's my job.

PRODUCER This play is all wrong.

LYSSA How can it be wrong? It was written by Aristophanes.

PRODUCER There are too many words.

CALLIE It's called dialogue.

PRODUCER There's no action, it is lugubrious Greek twaddle. A cooking show has more excitement. Someone might slice off their finger.

CALLIE And he knows the word lugubrious! Who would have thought.

PRODUCER I want the fire, scenes with the women running and screaming, men in a battle frenzy, the sex scene

LYSSA And for the last time, the women win the battle for the Akropolis. The very heart of the play is about challenging traditional roles and