



The Birds and Other Plays (Penguin Classics)

Aristophanes

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Five comedies from Ancient Greece that freely blend satire and slapstick

Offering a window into the world of ordinary Athenians, Aristophanes' *The Birds and Other Plays* is a timeless set of comedies, combining witty satire and raucous slapstick to wonderful effect. The plays in this volume all contain Aristophanes' trademark bawdy comedy and dazzling verbal agility. In *The Birds*, two cunning Athenians persuade the birds to build the utopian city of 'Much Cuckoo in the Clouds' in the sky, blockading the Olympian gods and installing themselves as new deities. *The Knights* is a venomous satire on Cleon, a prominent Athenian demagogue, who vies with a humble sausage-seller for the approval of the people; while *The Assembly-Women* deals with the battle of the sexes as the women of Athens infiltrate the all-male Assembly in disguise. The lengthy conflict with Sparta is the subject of *Peace*, inspired by the hope of a settlement in 421 BC, and *Wealth* reflects on the economic catastrophe that hit Athens after the war.

These lively translations by David Barrett and Alan H. Sommerstein capture the full humour of the plays. The introduction examines Aristophanes' life and times, and the comedy and poetry of his works, and this edition also includes an introductory note for each play.

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