

*Arms and the Man*  
George Bernard Shaw

Presented by  
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The play was first produced on 21 April 1894 at the Avenue Theatre and published in 1898 as part of Shaw's Plays Pleasant volume, which also included Candida, You Never Can Tell, and The Man of Destiny. *Arms and the Man* was one of Shaw's first commercial successes. He was called onto stage after the curtain, where he received enthusiastic applause. Amidst the cheers, one audience member booed. Shaw replied, in characteristic fashion, "My dear fellow, I quite agree with you, but what are we two against so many?"<sup>[5]</sup>

# CHARACTERS

RAINA PETKOFF

SERGIUS

SARANOFF

CAPTAIN

BLUNTSCHLI

CATHARINE

PETKOFF

MAJOR PETKOFF

LOUKA

NICOLA [\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)



## Pejorative military use of the term "chocolate soldier"

The chocolate-cream soldier of the play has inspired a pejorative military use of the term. In Israel, soldiers use the term "chocolate soldier" (Hayal Shel Shokolad, חייל של שוקולד) to describe a soft soldier who is unable to fight well.<sup>[14]</sup>

Similarly, members of the Australian Citizens Military Force were derided by the regular army as "chokos" or chocolate soldiers, the implication being that they were not real soldiers.<sup>[15][16]</sup>




The most damaging criticism of *Arms and the Man*, more common in the past but still heard today, is that Shaw was engaging in mere “topsy-turvyism” in the manner of William S. Gilbert, that he was simply turning things upside down to get a laugh from surprise and paradox in the manner of Oscar Wilde. Shaw consistently maintained that he was not, like Gilbert or Wilde, making fun of people who did not live up to ideals, but that he was making fun of the ideals as being impossible to live up to and contrary to the nature of man.



## How can the characters of Bluntschli and Sergius be compared?

Major Sergius Saranoff is an officer in the Bulgarian army. Bulgaria at this period was on the margins of Europe, and generally considered somewhat primitive and unsophisticated by Europeans....




## Discuss Arms and the Man as dramatic satire.

This play functions as a satire with two primary focus subjects: war and love. Throughout the text, Shaw satirizes the romantic notions of war that glorify such a terrible event. We are being...


## How does Act I introduce the theme of Arms and the Man?

The main theme of Arms and the Man by George Bernard Shaw is the difference between the romantic view of war as a space for heroic individualism and a more realistic, strategic, and pragmatic...



Shaw rejected romanticism and embraced realism. How realistic is Arms and the Man? How much of it...

This dichotomy really oversimplifies and misrepresents Shaw. Shaw was first and foremost a satirist whose plays tend to debunk popular misperceptions using humor and irony.



How is George Bernard Shaw's Arms and the Man an anti-romantic comedy?

Not only is Arms and the Man an anti-Romantic comedy, but its author, George Bernard Shaw, was the quintessential anti-Romantic writer.



**Good Luck**

