

Scene 1

On the stage. Daytime.

The set is gray and black themed. There are six chairs arranged in a semi-circle onstage along with a stand similar to that of an orchestra conductor's. There is a microphone in front of the stand.

Enter NARRATOR.

NARRATOR

Another day, another... dictator who rose to power! Ah, he has a lot of followers, too. No, I mean *literal* followers. Here they come.

NARRATOR steps to the corner and watches. Enter the DICTATOR with his flag. Six representatives, in a very straight line, follow him into the room. Each of the representatives is wearing a surgical mask. It is as if they are mutes, for they are so silent one could hear it if a needle drops to the ground.

NARRATOR

And our chubby dictator walks over to the stand.

The DICTATOR stands onto the stand. He realizes the microphone was too tall.

And... because of his vertical disadvantage, he is now adjusting the microphone.

The DICTATOR adjusts the microphone.

And he is waving his hand for the representatives to sit. Oh, but wait! They aren't sitting yet.

See? They are looking at each other and exchanging glances.

The representatives, standing before their respective chairs, exchange glances. They look nervous. The NARRATOR starts narrating their thoughts. REPRESENTATIVE 1 turns to REPRESENTATIVE 2.

NARRATOR

Should we sit?

REPRESENTATIVE 2 turns to REPRESENTATIVE 3.

NARRATOR

Why does he not have a throne?

REPRESENTATIVE 3 turns to REPRESENTATIVE 4.

NARRATOR

If we sit, will we be seen as...

REPRESENTATIVE 4 turns to REPRESENTATIVE 5.

NARRATOR

But he literally just gestured for us to sit.

REPRESENTATIVE 5 turns to REPRESENTATIVE 6.

NARRATOR

Yeah, we will be seen as disobeying his orders if we keep standing...

REPRESENTATIVE 6 turns—and then realizes they have no one to turn to. They sneeze – and in the process of sneezing, they accidentally sit down. Everyone freezes. When the DICTATOR raises his brows, all the representatives gradually sit down, still intimidated.

DICTATOR

Clears throat as he sets down his flag and puts on his puffer coat. Beat.

Why does it feel so warm? Someone, go turn on the air conditioner.

REPRESENTATIVE 1 runs offstage, turns on the air conditioner, and re-enters.

Good. Now that we are all feeling better, let's start our annual meeting. Does anyone have anything to say at the start of this meeting?

REPRESENTATIVE 6 is about to take off their mask, but DICTATOR holds up one hand to stop them.

Actually, this is my territory. I am the only one allowed to start the meeting. Alright. I'm here to talk about— no, *announce* three things. One, I would like to withdraw government funding of hospitals, police stations, and general office buildings. Two, I would like to make good use of all those fundings and redecorate my palace. God, it's atrocious right now. Three, I would like to resume my role as the dictator for the next few years. Do we have an agreement?

NARRATOR

Hold on, let me stop you right there. *(Everyone freezes except for the NARRATOR)* You may be wondering why no one is stopping him or causing a revolt. Let me explain the situation.

He stands behind each chair as he talks about each representative.

This is representative number one. This is her first year on the council. As soon as she got on the council, our dear dictator threatened her by proving he has the ability to kidnap her smaller brother, who is her only family member left. Of course, she would rather die than have to see him kidnapped. She was the quickest to succumb on this council. Surprise, surprise.

NARRATOR moves to REPRESENTATIVE 2.

This is representative number two. She looks rather pretty, doesn't she? Look at her expensive clothing and luxurious purse. No one on this council knows how impoverished she is. Now, there are some people who just have very low self-esteem, and the only scenario in which they would be willing to socialize is if their "upper-middle class" disguise is still intact. Unfortunately, to maintain this disguise, they would need to buy more counterfeit goods, leading to even more poverty. It's such a vicious cycle, and our lovely dictator grasped right onto this weakness of hers.

NARRATOR moves to REPRESENTATIVE 3.

This is representative number three. He is really a smart kid – graduated from an ivy league as a computer science major, got his masters from another ivy league, and then started working for a prestigious organization. Except he made this one mistake that almost cost him his life. He was conducting an experiment and accidentally hacked into one of the dictator's files in his personal computer. *That* kind of file, if you know what I mean. He was almost beheaded when the dictator learned of his talents and decided to recruit him. As long as he did dirty jobs for the dictator, he gets to keep his head. *(Sighs)*

NARRATOR moves to REPRESENTATIVE 4.

This is representative number four. Oh, well. He doesn't need much explanation. The dictator wanted him to join the council, but he refused. The dictator cut off his tongue, and now he's here. He wouldn't be able to *say* anything to disagree with the dictator anyways.

NARRATOR moves to REPRESENTATIVE 5.

This is representative number five. Gosh, he is not even from here! He was a spy from some region halfway around the globe. The dictator caught him and told him if he doesn't become a double agent, his capture would be broadcasted to the entire world. Representative number five thought, if news of his capture spread, his boss would send an assassin to kill him; if he dies either way, at least he has someone to protect him as long as he obeys.

NARRATOR moves to REPRESENTATIVE 6.

This is representative number six. She is... the youngest one in this entire room. A high school student. Can you believe it? Now, her family has always wanted her to study political science, so they found her an internship that has to do with the government. Our dictator took advantage of

her young age and told her that if she is ever disloyal to him, he will make sure that she gets into no college.

NARRATOR walks over to the DICTATOR, who was still standing at the microphone.

Our dictator really knows what he's doing. I mean, how many people in this world can just wake up one day and think, 'hey, I want to be a dictator', and then proceed to become one? Anyways, I'll step down and let's see what happens next.

All unfreezes. The DICTATOR stomps. All representatives tremble.

DICTATOR

(Menacingly) So. Does anyone have any objections?

All representatives shake their heads.

DICTATOR

Alright. Our first annual meeting is officially over. I'll see everyone next year on my second term as leader of this region.

Exit DICTATOR in a languid manner. Representatives stand up, exchange glances fearfully, and exit as well.

NARRATOR

And so. Another year passes by. Our dictator got his bathroom redesigned and added two new elevators. He also completely renovated the front hall of his palace. Finally, it's time for the second annual meeting and another re-election.

Enter DICTATOR in his puffer coat. The representatives follow in a straight line just like last time. This time, in addition to the masks, they have put on sweaters. DICTATOR walks to the microphone, sets down his flag, and gestures for the representatives to sit. This time, although they are still hesitant, they sit down much quicker.

DICTATOR

Let's get straight to the topic— why is it so warm here? Is the air conditioner on?

The representatives nod.

DICTATOR

Well, what are you staring at? Someone lower the temperature! It's sweltering.

Again, REPRESENTATIVE 1 runs to turn down the temperature and returns.

Good. Now that we are feeling cooler, let's talk. This year, I want to get rid of public transportations. Everyone should buy their own cars. It's much more convenient. Now, that's number one. Number two, I want strawberry shortcakes to be our official food. From now on, I want everyone to stop eating whatever else they are eating and eat strawberry shortcakes for their meals.

He snaps his fingers and looks towards REPRESENTATIVE 1. She shivers before realizing what he wants. Again, she rises from her chair, runs offstage, and comes back with a tray of strawberry shortcakes. She hands every representative and the DICTATOR each a shortcake.

Alright. That was number two. Number three, I would like to resume my leadership and go on a third term. Does anyone have anything to say?

NARRATOR

Now, at this moment, let me add on a bit more background information. It is very uncommon for a leader of this region to have more than two terms of leadership even though they are all dictators. Look at those representatives. They are all exchanging worried glances. Oh, look at representative number four and six! They are shifting towards the edge of their seats as if they want to say something... Oh, but wait! Number four no longer has a tongue. He can't say

anything. Number six, it's all up to you... oh no, look, she's sitting back. She is remembering what the dictator has threatened her with. Oh, well.

DICTATOR

(Beat) Oh, great! Looks like we have no objections this year. Every statement I have made today is effective immediately. I will see everyone next year.

Exit DICTATOR. The representatives rise, exchange glances, shake their heads simultaneously, and exit as well.

NARRATOR

And... Another year has passed by. The obesity rate in this region has skyrocketed due to these strawberry shortcakes. Oh, gosh, the patients with diagnosed diabetes. What are they going to have to do? Now, this is just getting ridiculous. If I were one of the representatives, I would have— Okay, here they come again.

Enter the DICTATOR and the representatives. This time, the representatives are wearing puffer coats as well. The DICTATOR walks straight up to the microphone, sets down his flag, and gestures for the representatives to sit. They still tremble, but at least they are less hesitant to sit now.

DICTATOR

Let's commence our third meeting this year, shall we? Also, can someone turn down the temperature?

REPRESENTATIVE 1 is about to rise, but REPRESENTATIVE 6 rises before she does and goes offstage to turn down the temperature. She soon returns. The DICTATOR looks surprised but does not say anything.

(Looks down at his puffer coat) Am I wearing too much? I don't think so. Perhaps we will feel cooler soon. Anyways, now that I have collected every type of plant possible and put them all into my garden, I don't have many more needs; therefore, I will not be increasing taxes this year. However, I do want to point out we are not producing enough strawberry shortcakes. I would like to build more factories that produce strawberry shortcakes. That is number one. Number two, I want to behead anyone who eats anything other than strawberry shortcakes. They are absolutely atrocious. Number three, I want to extend my leadership in this region for an infinite amount of time until I die. I presume I have been an excellent leader and will be able to lead us on to a brighter future. Does anyone disagree?

Representatives shake their heads, intimidated. The DICTATOR smiles and is about to conclude the meeting when something happens.

REPRESENTATIVE 6 takes off her mask. All gasps. The DICTATOR frowns.

REPRESENTATIVE 6 takes off her puffer coat. All gasps.

REPRESENTATIVE 6 takes off her sweater. All gasps.

REPRESENTATIVE 6 stands up and slowly walks towards the DICTATOR.

REPRESENTATIVE 1 covers her face. The others shake their heads, terrified as they try to signal that it is a bad idea.

REPRESENTATIVE 6 ignores them. She stares straight ahead at the DICTATOR, who stands there and remains motionless. She walks up, takes the microphone, turns around, goes back to her seat, but does not sit. She remains standing.

REPRESENTATIVE 6

I disagree. They disagree too.

The other representatives are all too shocked to say anything. They stare numbly at REPRESENTATIVE 6.

I don't care if you do what you say you would do to me. I will use representative number three's hacking power to get away. Oh by the way, I did not lower the temperature. I turned off the air conditioner instead.

The other representatives, as if they are just realizing what she is saying, snap back to reality. They took off their puffer coats and sweaters.

We, as a collective council, are done with you as our leader. We have been fed up with you for three years.

The other representatives pull off their masks, revealing their jaws which have dropped the moment REPRESENTATIVE 6 took off her mask. REPRESENTATIVE 1 starts clapping. It sounds soft and awkward until REPRESENTATIVE 2 joins her, The others soon join in as well.

Yeah. From now on, we are kicking you off the council. You are no longer allowed to be the dictator. You are dismissed from the meeting now.

NARRATOR pushes the DICTATOR, who is absolutely stunned, offstage.

The representatives all exit. This time, it seems as if they are all relieved.

NARRATOR

Yeah. Representative number six was a brave girl. The others asked her if she would like to be the new leader, but she said no. She ended up going to a good college, but she chose a major that has nothing to do with political science. The council changed completely, and hopefully, if another dictator happens to rise, someone as brave as representative number six would always stand up and voice their thoughts for everyone. End of story.

Exit NARRATOR. Beat. Blackout.