

DEMOCRACY FOR NOVICES

by

Andreas Flourakis

Translated by

Ted Theodosopoulos

Characters

Children

Location

School yard

Kids in the school yard

- A: D'you want to play prime minister?
B: What's that, a board game?
A: No, I'll be the prime minister.
B: And?
A: And you'll do what I tell you.
C: Why shouldn't I be the prime minister and you do what I tell you?
A: I thought it first.
B: Let's not call it prime minister, king is better.
C: We don't have a king, we have democracy.
D: Then, let's call it a democrat.
A: That's not what you call the leader of a country; he's the prime minister.
E: Or she.
A: Can girls be prime ministers?
C: Of course.
E: What, only the boys will win?
B: And how will we decide who it will be?
D: How do the adults do it?
C: You need a hiding place.
A: What hiding place?
C: Like a closet, but with a piece of cloth all around instead of wood.
B: And?
C: I've seen my mom, she goes into something like this and she votes. You know where? Here at the school.
A: Where will we find all the cloth to make the hiding place?
E: We could put together our jackets.
B: With what?
E: Staples.
B: It won't stand.
D: Why should we go into a hiding place to vote?
C: How else can we do it?
D: We can raise our hands, and the one most people want can be prime minister.
F: There must be a closet out of fabric so no one sees you when you vote.
G: That's annoying...
H: The vote is secret, the teacher explained it to us.
I: So, if I tell you who I voted for, what's wrong with that?
H: You'll go to prison.
I: Then I won't vote.
J: They'll still put you in prison, the vote is compulsory, the teacher told us that as well.
G: Don't be stupid, my parents never vote and they haven't gone to prison once.

F: Maybe they do.
 G: Go to prison?
 F: No, to vote.
 G: They say it themselves that they don't vote.
 J: Why?
 F: They know which party will win.
 H: How do they know it before the elections?
 F: There are polls.
 I: What's that?
 J: It's Paul in Greek. I have a cousin in Greece and they call him Pauls.
 F: Polls are surveys, something like elections before the elections. That's where you see who will win.
 G: Do they vote in a closet there too?
 F: No, you say what you'll vote for in the open, even on the phone.
 H: But isn't the vote secret?
 F: Not in the polls.
 I: And why shouldn't the prime minister come out straight from the (*with a pretentious accent*) polls?
 F: Because not everyone votes, only a few. But from these few you can see who will win.
 J: And aren't they ever wrong?
 G: My parents say that most of the time what they say happens.
 J: Since your parents don't vote in the regular elections, why don't they vote in the polls at least?
 G: Perhaps they do in those.
 I: If you don't vote in those, do you go to prison?
 F: You go to prison when you rob a bank, not when you don't vote.
 H: Guys, we don't need to make a closet out of fabric, we can take turns going behind that tree to vote.
 J: No one can see us there.
 I: And how will we do it?
 F: We'll just write on a piece of paper who we prefer. The one with the most votes will be for the prime minister.
 H: First, we need candidates.
 I: What's that?
 H: To say who wants to be prime minister.
 G: I don't want to.
 I: Why?
 G: I want to see how this game is played once before I decide.
 F: OK, whoever wants to, raise their hand.

Two girls (E,J) and two boys (D,N) raise their hands

K: We'll have a big battle.
 L: Now what?
 M: We'll launch a campaign.
 L: What's that now?
 M: We'll give speeches.
 N: To whom?
 M: To our voters.
 O: He means us.
 N: And what will we say?
 K: What we'll do if we win.
 L: I thought the prime minister makes others do what he wants.
 O: If you say this no one will vote for you.
 N: Should we lie then?
 O: Don't you want to do something good if you become prime minister?
 N: What good?
 O: To bring peace to the world.
 M: But we don't have war here.
 L: There is war in other countries.
 K: Do those countries not have prime ministers?
 N: Most must.
 K: Well then, they should bring peace to their countries.
 O: Perhaps they can't.
 M: If they can't, I've seen on TV how several prime ministers get together to create pressure for peace.
 O: Yes, peace! We should use such nice words so they'll vote for us.
 N: I won't say words I don't mean.
 M: You're right not to.
 N: I'll tell you things just as they are.
 O: Then you might lose votes.
 N: I don't care.
 G: I'll vote for you. I'll never vote for a liar.
 H: With you.
 M: The right democracy doesn't want lying prime ministers.
 I: I still haven't understood what democracy is...

The children sing (P,Q)

"What is democracy?"

Happiness?

Opportunity?

Enterprise?

But what is democracy, finally?

Therapy?
Nostalgia?
Ecology?
Could it be an ancient story?

In democracy you expect
to be equal to the other.
In democracy if you want
you can even have a parrot.

Dominance?
Fantasy?
Freedom?
What is the substance of power?

Rabbitocracy?
Buffalocracy?
Formicocracy?
Which the party that will bring our salvation?

In democracy you expect
to be equal to the other.
In democracy if you want
you can even have a parrot.

I: Parrot? Nah, I don't think so.

In democracy if you want
you can even buy a parrot.

A: Now that we settled that, should we go to vote?
D: First the candidate must give speeches.
B: Who will start?
C: Let's start alphabetically.
A: I don't want to be first.
D: I'll start.
E: Get up there so everyone sees you.

Each child, when giving their speech, they climb onto the platform in the school yard.

- D: I will decrease the hours of school. I will increase the breaks. In every break they'll give us chocolates and special pizzas with everything except onions.
- P: I don't want peppers either.
- Q: I'm allergic to cheese.
- D: We'll have many different types of pizza to choose from.
- A: And how will you convince them to give us pizza?
- D: I'll ask my mom to help.
- C: Do you mean for her to make them and bring them?
- P: Won't she get tired of making all these pizzas every day?
- D: I'll ask her. She never says no to me.
- Q: The principal always says no. Let's see how your mom will convince him to let us have fewer hours of school.
- C: She could bake him a pizza.
- A: It doesn't hurt for her to ask him. You never know. Maybe he also wants to get home earlier.
- B: I don't want fewer hours of school. I like it here.
- E: Don't worry, it isn't the principal or his mom who decide the hours of school.
- P: Who decides?
- E: The prime minister.
- D: Then my mom will speak with the prime minister.
- Q: Will it be easy to find him?
- D: Very easy. We live in the same home.
- A: With the prime minister?
- D: I will be prime minister.
- E: We're talking about the real prime minister, of the country, not the one we'll vote for.
- D: Ahhh, I don't know where that one lives.
- B: Are you done?
- D: Yes.
- C: Whose turn is it?
- N: Me.
- C: We're listening.
- N: I... I...

B: Yes?
 N: I will...
 G: *What a speech.*
 N: Wait, I got stuck.
 F: Why?
 N: I've never spoken to voters before.
 P: Imagine you're speaking to your classmates.
 G: He *is* speaking to his classmates.
 F: Imagine you're talking to us.
 H: He *is* speaking to us.
 N: Can I go next?
 I: No, you lost your turn forever.
 P: Don't listen to him, you can go when you want.
 N: I'll go in a little bit.
 F: Whose turn is it?
 J: Me, me!
 I: We're listening.
 J: I will bring peace to the whole planet. There won't be wars anywhere.
 I: We already said that.
 J: All children will have a home, food and water. We didn't say that. And, most importantly, every month we'll decorate a tall Christmas tree.
 F: How does Christmas follow?
 H: There are other religions too.
 J: And what do they decorate?
 H: My mom has a small Buddha in the living room.
 G: Are you Buddhists?
 H: No, she has him as decoration, but she's told me that some people don't celebrate Christmas.
 G: It's a shame.
 F: Not at all, they have other holidays, they decorate other things and eat different foods.
 I: What foods?
 H: I'll find out.
 F: Do you have Buddhist friends?
 H: I'll ask my dad, he's travelled everywhere.
 J: So Santa doesn't go to the Buddhists?
 K: There's no Santa.
 L: Does he mean there isn't one for the Buddhists?
 K: I mean there isn't one period.
 N: I think you're crazy.

M: Santa goes to Buddhists too, on other days than for us. That's how he can fit us all in.

K: There is no Santa.

O: Why don't you get lost.

N: Where did you hear that?

K: On TV.

O: My dad says not to believe what the TV says.

L: And who leaves presents for us under the tree?

K: Our parents.

M: And who leaves presents for our parents?

K: Ehhh...

L: See?

N: He fell for it.

K: Are you done with your speech?

J: No.

K: Wrap it up, others have turns too.

J: They should wait! I will make sure that all children whichever religion they want, whatever Christmas decorations they want, and lots of toys. Especially the ones in war.

P: It sounds good, but how will you do it all?

J: You'll help too.

N: How will we take presents to the children in war?

Q: We could send them by mail. Our old clothes, our old toys...

M: Why only the old? Let's send them new ones.

J: We have so many.

P: You put it well.

K: But you haven't said anything about us, whose votes you want.

Q: What do you mean ... he said we should give our toys.

J: When you give them, you too will feel good for helping.

K: You can't be serious.

J: I am serious.

A: At least the kids of the wars would surely vote for you.

B: I will vote for you!

J: Thank you.

H: Don't say it so loudly, the vote is secret.

Q: Can I go now?

C: At last.

N: I...

D: Yes?

N: I...

A: Yes?

N: I...

G: *Fantastic.*

N: Never mind, I'll give my speech at the end.

B: Whose turn is it?

E: I don't know how to give a speech but I'll try. I like it here at the school and I love the teachers. Now as far as chocolates and pizza during breaks ... it would be nice. I would prefer it if we all shared what we bring from home.

A: A bad idea.

B: Don't interrupt her.

E: I too want wars to end. And whoever among you has any problem or is bullied by the older kids they should tell us and we'll help them.

C: This was the best speech!

N: Because you still haven't heard mine.

A: You're the only one left.

B: Let's hear you too.

N: I... I... I...

G: *Fantastic.*

N: Eh, what can I say? The others said it all, they didn't leave anything for me. I... agree with everyone who went before!

G: *Bravo. Nice speech.*

N: I liked my speech.

I: Buddy, I'll vote you for sure.

H: Don't say it, the vote is secret.

I: My buddy knows how to keep a secret.

G: Are there any last-minute entrants?

J: ...None.

F: Now all we have to do is vote for one of you four.

N: I have a photograph on a motorcycle.

I: You ride a motorcycle?

N: My dad does. He even got me my own helmet!

J: What's that got to do with the elections?

N: Won't we make posters and put them up around the school? I'll use my photograph on the motorcycle with my dad.

F: It will take days to make posters.

G: I'm in a hurry too, I want to know who will be prime minister.

J: Let's vote now.

I: How?

F: We'll make a ballot.

I: What's that now?
F: Pieces of paper with the names of the four candidates.
G: Why don't you do it since you write fast.
H: Tear up some pages from your notebook and write the names of those four. One underneath the other.
F: How many ballots should I make?
H: As many as we are here.

The kid (F) tears up pages and begins to write the names of the four candidates.

J: Whoever is voting will put a heart next to the name of their favorite candidate.
G: No, he'll put a cross.
F: Why cross and not heart?
G: That's what I've heard they do.
H: We'll put a heart.
I: Cross.
J: Heart.
G: Cross.
F: Heart.
I: Cross.
H: Heart.
K: Can we put a smiley face instead?
L: Cross.
M: Heart.
P: Cross.
Q: Heart.
O: Cross.
M: Heart.
K: Should we vote for whether we'll put a cross or a heart?
F: Are you crazy? I'm not making another ballot.
A: We won't have a hundred elections, whoever wants to can put a cross and whoever wants to can put a heart. We'll count them both.
G: But the cross is the *only* right one. Haven't you heard that they cross the candidates?
N: If you plan to nail me to a cross, I quit.
G: *Fantastic.*
F: The ballots are ready.

L: These are nice letters? Mine are better.
F: D'you want to rewrite them?
L: No, your letters are fine.
F: Thanks.
K: Give each of us one.
F: Give each of us one, *please*.
K: Will you give each of us one, please?

The kid (F) passes around the ballots to the other kids.

L: You should put a cross next to one of the four names.
M: Or, put a beautiful heart next to her or him that you choose.
P: The hearts you draw don't look like real hearts.
Q: What do real hearts look like?
P: Like a lamb's intestines.
K: Eew!
P: I saw it in a movie.
O: Don't be stupid, hearts are beautiful.
C: Everyone will go behind the tree, so no one can see them.
B: And what will they do?
C: Put a cross...
Q: ...or a heart...
C: ...next to their favorite candidate. Then they'll fold the paper and bring it here.
E: I'll go first.
B: Why?
E: My last name starts with an A.
B: It's unfair. Mine starts with an X and I always go last.
E: I can give you my turn if you like.
B: I do.
A: And we don't vote for our buddy, we vote for the best candidate.
I: How can we know who is the best?
D: Vote for him whose speech you liked best.
J: Or *her*, if you liked her speech best.

The first kid (B) returns from the tree.

B: I voted. What now?
A: Can I go?
E: Normally we go alphabetically, but sure, you go.
C: Me next.
B: What do I do with the ballot?
A: Can you go and bring an empty box from the classroom?

A kid (Q) leaves running.

P: What d'you want it for?
A: We'll put the ballots inside.
D: They call this box something.
A: Ballox!
C: Why?
A: Each time a vote goes in, you hear a ball drop.

The kid (Q) comes running back with a carton box.

Q: Is this good?
A: It'll do.
C: I voted too. Now what?
G: The votes should hide in here.
F: Slide.
H: Hide.
I: Slide.
G: Hide.
J: They should slide.
H: Shouldn't they hide?
F: You're confusing them with voles.
H: What are voles?
F: Little rodents that burrow underground.

The kids who voted slide their votes in the box.

G: I didn't hear a ball drop.
I: I heard something.
J: I go now.
H: I'll go behind over there.
F: And I'll go behind that bench.
G: I don't know who to choose. I won't vote.
J: You abstain.
G: What's that?
J: When someone doesn't go to vote.
I: It's a shame to let others decide for you.
G: You're right. I'll vote.

While the kids are hiding in different places to vote, they sing (P,Q)

"No to abstaining"

The vote is power.
To build a world
more fair and with hope.

The vote is power.
To change, to have a
more nice country.

Now we'll vote,
for our voice to be heard.
Each of our votes counts.
We say no to abstaining.

The vote is power.
To build tomorrow
with vision and responsibility.

The vote is power.
And anyone not interested
isn't the sharpest one.

Now we'll vote,
for our voice to be heard.
Each of our votes counts.
We say no to abstaining.

- G: What's the opposite of abstaining?
J: Participation. Like we're doing now.
H: Are we done?
F: What are you doing all this time behind the tree?
H: I can't decide. Can I put a heart and a cross?
I: Don't vote for two candidates. Your ballot will be void.
H: Why?
I: The rules are the same for everyone.

The last kid (O) slides his ballet in the box.

- K: This was the last one.
L: And now?
F: We'll count them.
L: You will. You do well in arithmetic.
F: I wrote the names, someone else should do it.
N: I'll do it.
M: You are a candidate, you can't count the votes.
N: Why?
O: Because you might erase the crosses...
M: ...or the hearts...
O: ...and make them all count for you.
N: They will all be for me in any case.
K: You're dreaming.
L: Me, when I wake up, I never remember my dreams.
M: I like to write down some of my dreams. My mom says I'll be a writer.
L: Do you want to?
M: I want to be a psychologist.
K: Focus people. You four candidates will not be close by when we are counting the votes.
N: We'll be wherever we want.
J: Where should we go?

K: Why don't you go in the classroom for a bit?
O: When we're done counting, we'll call you.

The four kids (D,E,J,N) exit right.

M: Are they gone?
K: Yes.
Q: Let's go shoot some hoops too.
L: And who will count the votes?
Q: How about no one?
O: Don't you want us to have a prime minister?
Q: I could care less.
P: Where are you going?
Q: To play basketball. If you want to join me, I'll be in the yard on the back.

The kid (Q) exits left

B: What's got into him?
A: Let's ask the counselor.
C: He's jealous that he won't be prime minister.
P: He could have been a candidate if he wanted.
A: He didn't want to.
C: Maybe he did but he was shy.
B: We're not going to be prime ministers either, but we don't go on like this.
A: Should we start?
B: What?
A: Counting.

The kids take the ballots out of the box.

A: We'll get confused if we count them all together.
C: I'll do it myself.

One kid (C) takes the ballots out one by one and marks them on a piece of paper.

A: Afterwards I'll count them too, in case you make a mistake. I'm a wiz in arithmetic.
C: What are you?
A: A wiz. That's what my dad says.
C: Maybe you're a cheese.
B: With rizz.
P: And fleas.
A: People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

The kid (Q) returns from the backyard.

P: Why'd you come back so soon?
Q: It wasn't fun playing hoops by myself.
F: That's why I like elections, because we do them all together.
G: Come see how it's done, and next time we play *prime minister* you can be a candidate too.
Q: You think?
H: What'll happen if the first two candidates have the same number votes?
I: We'll have another election.
G: If we do the same things, I'll go paint.
F: Would you like to paint the winner?
G: That's not a bad idea.
C: I counted them all.
A: I'll count them too, to be certain.
P: Alright, fleas. I know, glass houses and all.

The kid (A) recounts the votes.

F: Should we play a trick on them?
G: What?
F: Let's tell them all four of them are tied.
H: I have a better idea. Let's declare as prime minister the one with the least votes.
I: I say to make someone else prime minister.

H: Who?
 I: The lady from the cafeteria.
 G: As if she'd like that.
 F: Should we make a cat prime minister?
 I: A dog is better. My dog.
 H: What make is it?
 I: Our car?
 H: The dog.
 I: He's a mutt. We rescued him off the street.
 F: What's his name?
 I: Chippy. We sometimes call him Chips, because he likes potato chips.
 F: Chippy for prime minister!
 H: I wouldn't vote for him with this name.
 I: The name doesn't matter, as long as he's good.
 K: The dog? At what?
 I: The moment I tell Chips "sit", he sits down at once!
 L: An obedient prime minister.
 M: This is good, if he obeys his people. If he obeys others, we'll have a problem.
 A: I counted them. My numbers agree with yours.
 C: I told you so.
 O: Who was first?
 A: Wait till I call them back.

A kid (K) runs off on the right. In a bit, the five kids enter from the right.

D: What happened? Who won?
 A: You ...
 D: Really? Thaaaaaanks!
 C: You came fourth.
 D: Fourth? How many are we? (*He counts the candidates.*) What, I came last? And my mom will bring us pizza?
 K: If she does, she shouldn't put onion.
 P: Nor pepper.
 D: As if she's gonna make pizza for you.
 L: It doesn't matter, I'll tell my mom to make some for us.
 D: She doesn't do it as well as mine.
 L: How d'you know?

D: Does she use whole wheat flour and organic tomatoes?
L: I don't know.
M: What are organic tomatoes?
O: Tomatoes with organs.
M: I never ate tomatoes with organs.
D: Now I won't bring you anything. Who didn't vote for me?
O: The vote is secret, that's why we voted behind the tree.
D: I will never speak to any of you again.

The kid (D) starts to leave annoyed.

E: Wait. You're good at other things.
D: At what? Bringing you pizza?
B: When did you bring us pizza?
E: If we voted on who runs fastest, I would vote for you.
A: Me too.
D: I confess, I run fast.
A: Faster than anyone else.
C: Are we friends still?
D: Sure!
F: You came third.
E: I came behind the one who couldn't even say a word?
N: Silence if golden, my godmother says.
J: And you came second, because you didn't say a word?
H: He didn't come second.
J: What?
I: He came first.
J: First?
N: I didn't expect that.
H: And you second.
J: Almost.
I: You spoke so well I thought you'd come first.
N: First! I came first. I am your new prime minister.
F: Speech – speech – speech!
N: Thank you, I don't know what to say. I... I will... I will be...
G: *Fantastic.*
N: I will be...
F: Stand still for a bit.

N: Why?
F: I am painting your portrait.
N: Really? I'd like you to paint me wearing a suit.
F: I'm only painting your head.
N: I like my head. Make my hair beautiful.
G: Should we give the painting to the reporters?
N: Yes! So everyone can learn I'm the new prime minister of the whole country.
I: The whole grade.
L: Where can we find the reporters?
K: They're crammed inside the TV.
O: All day they say the news. They never go home.
M: And where do they sleep?
K: Under the studio.
N: Now that I'm prime minister, I will give them new beds with mosquito nets, so they write nice things about me.

"This prime minister" (P,Q)

A good prime minister
must be serious.
But this prime minister
seems a bit mischievous.

A good prime minister
must care a lot.
But this prime minister
thinks only of his coiffure.

L: What will you do now that you've won?
N: I don't know.
K: Do you want to be a bad prime minister?
N: To be bad?
O: You could have tricked us with your speech...
N: What speech?
O: ... and now that you've won you could show your true colors. I've seen it in a movie.
M: My favorite movie is *Ponyo*.

N: What's that?
M: Japanese.
L: My mom makes sushi with salmon.
O: The author?
L: The fish.
N: And how should I be bad, what can I do?
K: You should tax us.
N: It sounds good.
D: You should demand our allowance.
B: We'll give him our money?
D: Not all of it. So that we don't get too angry, you should ask us for half of it.
N: I want all the citizens of this school to give me half of your allowance.
A: You must also say for what reason.
N: Ehhh... I will.... ehhh...
G: *Fantastic.*
D: Say something, even if it's a lie.
N: Ehhh... I want taxes to build a school.
C: We are in a school.
N: I'll make a school inside the school.
B: Why?
N: So I'm the principal.
E: The prime minister is above the principal.
N: Then, I want taxes to build a... a bridge!
B: Will it cross over the road?
A: We'll go from one sidewalk to the opposite, safely.
N: Not at all. I'll build a big bridge to connect the school with the sea. As soon as we finish here, we'll go and play at the beach.
D: We, who got fewer votes, should oppose him.
C: Why?
D: We are the opposition.
C: What's that?
D: Something like a shadow prime minister.
C: That is, for everything the prime minister says, you'll critique it.
E: Why? I like the idea of a bridge to connect us to the sea.
A: You can't build such a large bridge.
B: You can.
A: Where will it hang from, the sky?
B: In the summer, we crossed a huge bridge to go on vacation.

A kid (I) makes to give him money.

- N: What's this?
I: It's half of my allowance. I want very much a bridge that will connect the school with the sea.
N: Don't give your money to me.
I: Who should I give it to?
N: My assistant.
I: Who is it?
N: I declare you my assistant.
G: As if I want to be your assistant.
N: I command you.
G: I won't help, unless...
N: Unless?
G: You give me half.
N: Half of the bridge? What will you do with it?
G: Half of the taxes.
N: It's not enough that they only give me half of their money, I'll now give half of my half to you? What will remain for me to pocket?
J: You mean, to build the bridge.
N: That's what I mean, opposition.
G: Then, you collect your own taxes.
N: OK, I'll give you half.
G: Stick it here. (*To another kid*) Give me the money, what are you waiting for?
I: I changed my mind, I'll buy a toast.
G: What can I do, prime minister, he's not paying up?
N: Put him in prison.
G: Do we have a prison?
N: That's the simplest thing. Get me a chalk.
F: I have some.
N: Draw a square.

The kid (F) draws a square on the ground.

- N: Bigger. This square will be the prison. Put in the prison all who aren't paying.

The assistant (G) transfers the kid (I) in prison.

N: Am I a bad enough prime minister?
K: The baddest.
L: The worst.
M: The worstest.
O: I have seen worse.
N: Prime ministers?
O: No, villains.
N: Where?
O: On TV.
L: The bridge, will we build it?
N: What bridge?
L: The bridge you promised to build with the taxes.
M: That we can use to go straight to the beach.
N: Ah, that bridge.
K: Did you trick us?
N: You dare say that the king tricks you?
M: The prime minister.
K: Yes, I do.
N: Prison!

The assistant (G) takes the kid (K) to prison.

E: I protest that you put him unfairly in prison.
N: Protest all you want, opposition. Am I very bad now?
L: Worster!
M: Baddester!
Q: Baddesworster!
O: I have seen worse.
N: Where?
O: On TV.
N: What else should I do? (*To his assistant.*) Go collect the money so I can get a new bicycle.
L: So we can build the bridge, you mean.

N: What bridge? Ah, yes, for the bridge.
G: What is this you're giving me?
A: A check.
G: Check?
A: Bank draft. I've signed it. For a million!
B: A million!
G: Do we accept checks?
N: We do, we do!

The kids tear up some pieces of paper and give out "checks".

C: Two million.
E: Twenty million.
Q: A hundred million.
N: I'm a millionaire!
G: Me too.
N: Why you?
G: Because you'll give me half your money. We agreed.
N: Prison.
G: Prison? What for?
N: For...
D: For impoliteness to the prime minister?
N: Well said! For impoliteness to the prime minister.
G: You'll lock me up?
N: No.
G: I thought so.
N: I'll lock you out. There! (*He shows him the square of the prison.*)
E: That's where you end up if you help the bad guys.
G: And who will put me in prison?
N: My assistant.
G: I am your assistant.
N: I command you to put yourself in prison.
G: Am I dumb?
N: Then, I'll put you.

The prime minister (N) puts his assistant (G) in prison.

G: And who will collect money for you now?
N: I don't need any more. I have enough to get not one, but a hundred bicycles.
A: You mean, to build bridges.
N: Not *bridges*. Bridge. One bridge.

The kids convene softly in prison

I: Let's escape.
G: Not yet.
I: Why not?
G: Let him put everyone he hasn't thrown in prison to build the bridge, and then we can escape.
K: They will work, and we'll rest.
I: Where can one rest in here?
G: Why don't you sit cross-legged like Buddha.
K: And when the bridge is ready, we'll go and play at the beach.

The kids sit cross-legged in prison. The prime minister waves to the kids who are not in prison to approach him.

N: What are you staring at me for? It's time we built the bridge. That's what everyone will remember me for.
B: Ford?
N: Sure, even Ford. You, who paints well, you'll make a beach on big pieces of paper. You'll put it there.
B: Alright.
N: And the rest of you, take some materials from the classroom. We'll pull it all together up to the beach.

Some kids (A,C,E) run off and return with materials

A: And you, what will you do?

N: I am the prime minister. I will watch you.
C: Don't watch us too closely or you might get tired.
N: Go get me a sandwich from the cafeteria.
C: Go and get it yourself.
N: Hey, assistant, get me a sandwich from the cafeteria.
G: I'm in prison.
N: Get out for a bit, bring me the sandwich and get back in.
G: Escape from prison? No way. I obey the law.
N: How did I get into this mess? Thankfully I have a few almonds. They are doing a good job with this bridge.

As the kids are building the structure they sing (A,C,E,P,Q)

"A proper democracy"

A proper democracy
cares for the schools.
Builds modern hospitals.
A proper democracy
makes bridges strong
all the way to the beach.

A proper democracy
fights the injustice
in adults and kids.
Has caring for all.
Foreign, elder
even poor.

In a proper democracy
all have a job.
Not even one of us
without a home.
Without caring or bread
not even any pet.

A proper democracy

loves the artists,
honors them justly.
A proper democracy
builds for every kid
shadowless dreams.

N: Look, the bridge is ready! Do you like it?
E: How can we not like it? We built it, prime minister.
N: But it was my idea.
A: Didn't you say it would connect to a sea?
C: Where is the beach?
N: Look closely.
C: We are looking.
N: There!

The prime minister shows them a painted beach.

A: That's not a sea.
N: It's a sea.
E: It's painted.
N: I never said I'd build a bridge to the *real* sea, only to the sea is what I said.
C: You tricked us.
N: Me? That's an insult. Prison!
C: I will gladly go.

The kid (C) goes to prison by itself.

N: Was I bad?
F: Baddie.
H: Realbaddie.
J: Realbaddonutie.
P: Realbaddemandinggrouchie.
A: Superrealbadmadgrouchiedonuttricksterie.
B: Realbadgrouchiemadhairydonuttricksterieuglyfacepretendbaddie.
D: Snobbybadrealgrouchiepretenddonuttricksteriemadworstuglyfacebooger-

noseintheairsilly.

E: Badpretendgrouchiemadmeatballuglyfacesillyboogernoseintheairblahblah-Gossipywordddiarrheatricksteriehalfsourasifdeludedscrunchdupbad-blabbermouth.

Q: Supercatastrophreaksillybadmouthmadtricksteriecrouchiesurface-Annoyingbuggernoseblabbermouthmelodramaticculturedarkmiserly-postmodernsappygossipmisanthropicblahblatroubledhipsterknowitall-mickiemou senarcissoruffian.

O: I have seen rougher ones.

N: Rougher ones, eh?

O: Yes.

N: Prison!

O: I don't mind.

N: Let me see you now looking for worse people in prison.

O: That's where they put the bad people, right?

K: Not in ours.

O: All prisons have TVs.

N: Not ours.

O: Damn...

N: Go on, what are you waiting for? Did you think I'll take you?

O: Don't inconvenience yourself. I'll go by myself.

The kid (O) goes to prison.

E: Time for you to pay us.

N: Why?

E: For the bridge we built, prime minister.

N: I bought materials for you to build it with.

B: What did you buy?

A: When?

B: The sheets of paper from the notebooks are ours.

A: And we found everything else in the classroom.

N: Here, take a few checks.

The prime minister gives them (A,B,E) some "checks".

N: I'll hold on to the rest.
D: Why?
N: Because I'm the king.
B: The prime minister you mean.
N: Yes, that's right.
F: Are you sure you've understood what is a prime minister?
N: Of course! What do you take me for, a fool?
E: We vote for the prime minister to mind the country and take care of the people.
N: Don't I take care of you? I built you a whole bridge.
A: We did that by ourselves.
N: I had the idea.
H: What an idea.
J: And what will you do with the extra money you got from the taxes?
N: I'll buy a bicycle.
L: Will you give it to a citizen?
N: Yes, I'll give it... to me!
Q: You should use the tax money to do something for us.
N: What do you want me to do?
M: Buy ambulances.
P: Get fire trucks, so the forests don't burn down.
E: Increase the pensions for the grandpas and grandmas.
N: Is anyone one of us elderly?
D: No.
N: Well, when we get old, I'll increase the pensions too.
A: Fix up the schools that need renovations.
N: Is anyone of us a kid?
B: All of us.
F: When it rains, the classroom ceiling drips.
N: You should open an umbrella. I will buy a bicycle with these checks and I'm not giving them away to anyone.
H: Don't you have a bicycle?
N: I do, but I'll get a new one, without training wheels.
D: You still use training wheels?
N: Prison!
H: What did he do?
N: He was being smart.

The kid (D) goes to prison.

L: You're a bad prime minister.
 N: Thank you.
 L: That's not a good thing.
 N: You're jealous of me.
 L: Should we have elections again?
 N: How dare you? Prison!
 L: Sure thing...
 N: And you (L) and you (M) and you (A) and you (E) and you (J)...
 H: But she is the opposition.
 N: I'll put her in prison, whatever she is.
 H: What did she do?
 N: She's always against me.
 F: That's what the opposition does.
 N: Not anymore.
 Q: You overdid it.
 N: Everyone in prison! EVERYONE! Am I bad now?
 P: Now you're dumb.
 N: You get two life sentences.
 A: Archdumbass.
 N: Ten life sentences.
 B: Doubledumbassidiot.
 N: A million life sentences.
 F: Superdoubledrydumbassweirdmadtricksterieloudmouth.
 N: A billion million life sentences!
 F: Only? Add a little more.
 N: Go on, what are you waiting for? Do you want me to drag you by force or to make the army do it?
 L: We have an army?
 N: I'll make one if I want to.
 M: With who?
 N: I'll ask kids from other grades.
 P: Can he do that?
 N: I can do anything. Go on, prison!
 Q: Will we all fit in the prison?
 N: You'll squeeze and you'll fit.

The kids go to prison.

N: I will cross the bridge I made, go to the beach and eat my almonds.
A: Be careful, so they don't choke you.
N: I will, condemned convict.
A: I'm condemned to listen to your stupidities.

The prime minister crosses the bridge ostentatiously, sits on the painted beach, with his back to the prison, and eats almonds.

B: Now what do we do?
D: What else, we escape.
C: How?
E: I say we dig a tunnel and come out in the classroom.
G: With what can we dig? Our hands?
F: We can't dig the floor, we need a jackhammer.
H: Where will we find a jackhammer?
I: I know! Outside my home they've been working, for years, to build a metro line.
J: And you don't mind so much racket?
I: I'm used to it. I can't stand it when it's quiet. They have many jackhammers there.
K: There is an easier way for us to escape.

The kid (K) exits the square of the prison.

G: *Fantastic.*

The rest of the kids exit the same way.

L: Now what do we do?
O: I say we recall him from prime minister.
M: We can't, we voted for him.
O: So?

M: So he'll be prime minister for another four years.
O: Four years?
P: Mamma mia...
Q: We should have a demonstration.
A: A peaceful march.
B: What's that?
C: Something like a parade.
D: Will we hold a flag?
E: We'll hold banners with slogans.
G: What slogans?
F: For *Peace*.
I: For *Justice*.
H: So we don't destroy the *Environment*.
J: To get rid of the primidiot minister.
L: Any slogans we want.
K: With this prime minister we elected, I'm beginning to wonder.
M: What?
K: Should we maybe also have slogans against democracy?
L: I like democracy.
M: My grandma says even the worst democracy is better than anything else.

As the kids build banners they sing (All but N)

"The fair democracy"

Even the worse democracy
is better than dictatorship.
Even the worse democracy
is better than a royalty.

Even the worse democracy
is better than oligarchy.
Even the funniest democracy
is better than a dynasty.

Even the worse democracy
is better than...

A: The violence?
B: The IRS?
D: The pizza place?
C: Censorship?
E: Anna-Marie?
F: Cheeseburgerie?
I: Chickenfisherie?
H: Perhaps... simply injustice?
J: That's it!

A good democracy
protects us from every injustice.

N: What happened, you flew the coup?
G: As if we'd sit there crossing our legs.
N: And you're even singing?
A: Not only are we singing, we'll even have a march.
K: Let's go.

The kids march (all but N). They hold the banners they made, with their own slogans, relevant or not.

Q: Free-now-all-those-you-put-in-prison-unfairly!
(All together): Free-now-all-those-you-put-in-prison-unfairly!
N: The prison is empty. You all escaped.
P: Put-at-once-in-prison-all-who-deserve-to-be-there.
(All together): Put-at-once-in-prison-all-who-deserve-to-be-there.
N: As if I would go to prison.
Q: Your-new-bicycle-now-belongs-to-all-your-people!
(All together): Your-new-bicycle-now-belongs-to-all-your-people!
N: I haven't even bought it yet. When I do, only I will ride it, no one else.
P: Re-sign-bad-bad-prime-minister!
(All together): Re-sign-bad-bad-prime-minister!
N: As if I would resign. Now-that-you-voted-for-me-you're-all-cooked!
(Some kids – G,K,L,M): Now-that-you-voted-for-me-you're...

O: ... You're shouting his own slogan.
(Two kids – P,Q): You're-shouting-his-own-slogan?
N: Go on now, return to your cell. I want to take a nap at the beach. When I wake up, I'll punish all of you.

The prime minister lies down at the "beach". The kids walk disappointed.

A: We can't do anything.
B: Absolutely nothing.
E: Yes, we can.
C: What?
D: I have no idea.
E: We are many, we can catch him and put him in prison.
F: We won't use violence.
G: Why?
J: Because violence destroys democracy.
I: And what will we do?
O: We'll first make a Parliament and we'll have a vote against him.
L: Can we do something like this?
M: Yes, the teacher has told us, it's called a vote of censure.
K: What is censure?
H: Something like a denture.
P: But a sharp denture.
Q: Very sharp.
N: You're not scaring me, I have even seen thrillers.
K: And how will we make a Parliament?
A: You who can draw well, make a half circle with a piece of chalk.
B: Easy.
A: So we all fit inside.
D: We'll be legislators!
C: We'll even have huge cars?
E: Those are for the idiots.

The kid (B) makes a large semicircle with a piece of chalk. The kids take their places on the perimeter of the semicircle.

- F: Should we begin the vote?
G: Why don't we?
H: Who votes against the prime minister?

All but one (Q) of the kids raise their hands.

- I: Everyone, except for one.
J: Who votes in favor of the prime minister?
N: Wait.

The prime minister has risen from the "beach" and is approaching.

- N: How can I take a nap with all this scheming against me? You'll vote without me?
K: You can vote too if you want.
J: Who vote in favor of him?

The prime minister raises his hand.

- L: One.
N: Hey, guys, no one else? You, buddy (*towards G*)?
G: You forget that you put me in prison?
L: You didn't vote for or against.
K: You must vote.
O: Not that I like it, but he could take no position if he wants.
Q: I'll vote blank.
M: What are the results?
O: One in favor, one blank, and everyone else against.
P: We won!

The kids are celebrating, except the ex prime minister

N: So now I'm no longer prime minister?

A: You aren't.

B: You aren't.

N: And what will I be?

C: You could be the driver of the prime minister.

N: I like the idea. I'll even buy a hat! I will practice driving with my new bicycle.

D: Forget it. The checks you got, we'll take them back.

N: Why?

E: There are more important things to do with the tax money than the bicycle.

N: What things?

F: The hole at the ceiling of the classroom.

N: I wouldn't call it a hole. A fine crack, that drips once in a while. And only when it rains.

G: When would it drip, when it's sunny?

N: Ah, there goes my bicycle... My whole life I'll have training wheels.

H: You can ask your parents to take off the training wheels.

N: You can do that?

I: You became prime minister, of course you can do that!

N: And now, who will take my place?

K: Do you want to become prime minister, opposition?

J: Could I be something else? Like President of the Republic?

L: What's that?

J: I've heard that's the most important guardian.

M: Of what?

J: The laws and justice in the land. And I'll look to see whether the prime minister is doing his job well.

O: All of us should be guardians of democracy and the laws, not only the president.

A: You're right.

B: Let's all be presidents of the republic.

E: It's best if we all become guardians of the republic.

C: And we. (*Towards the audience.*) Who else? Yes, you too!

D: What are we to do about a prime minister?

N: I can, if you want, be one again.

F: As if.

I: We worked so hard to get rid of you.

H: We'll have elections tomorrow.

N: I will be a candidate again.

G: Me too! My buddy...

N: What?
 G: What what? Won't you vote for me?
 N: No.
 G: No?
 N: No way.
 J: Until tomorrow let's think hard about the speech we'll give and what we want to do for the school.
 I: Let's not promise things we can't deliver.
 M: And let's vote for the best one.
 F: Not the one who's our friend or who sits with us.
 K: I won't make the same mistake.
 L: Or who's our relative.
 Q: Or because he's a boy or a girl or anything else.
 P: Or because he's witty and brings pizzas.
 A: Well, if someone brings pizzas we won't say no.
 E: We vote for who has proposals that will benefit all of us.
 D: Without onion.
 F: What's without onion?
 D: The pizzas.
 P: And without peppers.
 M: Put a little tomato.
 L: Democracy is nice, but pizzas are perfect!
 Q: Don't forget, I'm allergic to cheese.
 G: *Fantastic!*

The kids sing.

"You should vote too"

You should always vote
 for you have a voice.
 Your opinion counts.
 It must be heard.

Turn off the News.
 Make the effort.
 So your kids will have
 a better life.

Your vote counts.
Don't miss a chance.
We must all work
for democracy.