

The Assembly

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The wait was finally over. This moment would define everything. Once I crossed that threshold, nothing would be the same. All eyes would be on me —especially those of the Chief Delegate— seated at the far end of the hall with a folder pressed firmly against her chest. There, she would record every flaw, every stammer, every hesitation.

I waited for her nod of acceptance before daring to begin. I could not help but notice the noise of the chairs scraping, the small particles of dust floating in the air, my trembling hands. Taking a deep breath, I straightened the pages of the speech that would determine the future of this small nation.

Audiences in general are not easy to entertain or satisfy, especially these days. One no longer needs only a perfectly-planned lecture that covers every goal for the near future, it is also mandatory to find ways to capture attention and hold it relentlessly from the first word to the last.

This small nation was indeed full of curious listeners. After having heard a big wave of complaints coming from them, I assumed that the past four years had not been the best for some. They argued that democracy was not working due to deficient organisation and distribution, that benefits were concentrated in only a few and some claims had not been heard. It was understandable that they should not believe me at first when I said that I was there to change it all, to bring a new perspective. After all, they had heard that too many times.

Still, I stood firm and began with my initiatives. The first concerned the voice of the people: everyone would have equal rights to speak and participate in debates while also being granted well-deserved rest. Yet this nation cannot survive without order. It would also be crucial to establish some rules, making sure all the work should be carried out meticulously. Finally, I could not forget to highlight the value of mutual assistance, of working together.

After a few minutes' monologue, the moment I was waiting for began: they started throwing questions at me. Some might loathe them. I, on the other hand, welcome them. They are the living proof that listeners are, as a matter of fact, paying attention —involved and concerned with the topic you are expounding on. One asked what would happen if the promised changes failed; another wanted to know if I had already planned my activities for the year. Here is the drawback, while I adore the interest, I draw the line here. This line is so perilously thin that it almost feels ironic (though dealing with those limits is one of our superpowers).

I raised my hand, calling for order. At that instant, I realised leadership was not about delivering perfect speeches, but also about the silence that follows. Some members of the audience quietly noticed the general restlessness. As I looked around the room, I wondered how many of them truly believed me, how many actually *trusted* me. Had I used the proper words? Had I made myself clear? Were they convinced by the authority I was trying to transmit? Had the Chief Delegate taken too many notes? There were too many questions echoing in my head, to which I had no answer. Yet the fact that some were nodding in approval gave me a sense of satisfaction.

I closed my folder. I took the time to look at each one of them. My heart was still racing, my hands trembling. But, deep down, I did not feel fear. I was proud, I was relieved. Everyone was looking back at me —expectant, ready, curious. I picked up a piece of chalk and went straight to the board.

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“You can have your break now. See you next class.”

And just like that, the bell rang, and the day came to an end. My audience ran to the playground and I nodded with satisfaction, feeling that I now belonged.