

Athens

The Birth of Democracy

Characters.

Total Characters. 18 main parts, 1 clerk to the Council, any number of crowd, council men and patrons of the pub. (*Numbers are flexible*).

Olympia News Organisation Reporters:

Kirsty -	A Presenter
Zoe -	A Presenter
Kate Adieus -	A Reporter
Iona Fish -	A Weather Reporter
Prof Aristides -	An Expert
Peisirodus -	A Sports Reporter

Greeks:

Advisor -	Advisor to Hippias
Hippias -	The Tyrant
General -	The General
Cleisthenes (Cle-s-th-a-nes) -	An Aristocrat of Athens
Ephialtes -	An Athenian Politician
Pericles -	An Athenian Politician
Carpus -	A Merchant
Herodion -	A Merchant
Medus -	The Landlord
Kallipos -	A Councilman of Athens
Pericles -	A Citizen of Athens
Anaxos -	Chairman of the Council

Extra Parts:

Clerk to the Council, crowd, council men, patrons of the pub.

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2,500 years ago in Ancient Greece the first democracy evolved in the city state of Athens, they didn't elect their representatives, people were chosen by a ballot of all eligible citizens. If enough people thought that a representative was failing he would be ostracised for ten years. This form of democracy spread across almost all the Ancient Greek states and continued until the time of the Roman invasion.

In Ancient Greece the rights of the people were not equal. In today's society everyone has equal rights whether they are women, poor, or of a different race. The founding fathers of the United States of America used the Ancient Greek model of Democracy as the base from which they built their constitution.

In reality it took over 50 years for the Athens model of democracy to develop, but the ideas behind it and the way it developed as set out, will help your children to understand the importance of our current democratic institutions, and for that reason this is a fictional account based on the facts as we now know them, which for the purposes of this show have been reduced into a matter of weeks.

This is a fictitious story based on how the city state of Athens evolved their democracy, using real names from the time, whilst truncating the whole story into a matter of months, when it actually took nearly 50 years to evolve.

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Song List.

1. **Revolution** - Citizens of Athens
2. **Everyone Can Have a Vote** - Hippias
3. **Democracy** - Cleisthenes, Ephialtes & Pericles.
4. **Money, Money Lovely Money** - Carpus & Herodion.
5. **It Could be You** - Ephialtes.
6. **Power to All the People** - Citizens of Athens
7. **The Assembly** - Kallipos.
8. **The Working Man** - Cleisthenes & All
9. **The Business of The Council** - Clerk to the Council & All.
10. **They Are Corrupt** - Pericles & Drinkers.
11. **The Deselection Samba** - Medus.
12. **We've Sorted Democracy** - The Cast

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SCENE ONE - The Parthenon

The screens showing the Parthenon are across the back of the performance area. At the front on the left, when looking from the audience, is a desk with a sign on it "The Olympia News Organisation – O-NO". Behind the desk sit the two newsreaders, Kirsty and Zoe. As the music starts the cast slowly start walking from the back of the performance area to the front singing as they walk so that by the end of the song they have filled the area

SONG 1: Revolution - The Citizens of Athens.

We are the hearts of the people.
We are their heart and their soul.
We stand upright with an army of light.
No more dictators can control.

We've had enough of the torment,
Slaving away 'till we die.
We want a voice now it's time to make a choice,
Everyone must choose to survive.

Revolution is coming to the city.
Revolution is coming to your home.
We will stand and fight,
Not fade into the night.
Revolution is burning in my soul.

Some have a starving existence.
Some need to fight for some pride.
We want a voice, now it's time to make a choice.
Everyone must choose to survive.

Revolution is coming to the city.
Revolution is coming to your home.
We will stand and fight,
Not fade into the night.
Revolution is burning.....

Revolution is coming to the city.
Revolution is coming to your home.

We will stand and fight,
Not fade into the night,
Revolution is burning in my soul.

A reporter runs across the front of the performance area, holding a red sign with the words "BREAKING NEWS". Once he reaches the other side, Kirsty starts to read from a stone tablet.

Kirsty. Reports are just coming in of riots at the Parthenon. There are massive riots against our leader, Hippias the Tyrant, and this time they appear really violent.

Zoe. At the same time we are hearing that the Sparta army is on our border. We are taking you over immediately to the Parthenon and our intrepid reporter Kate Adieus.

Kate enters from the left of the performance area. She is wearing a Greek toga and a flack jacket with a stone microphone in her hand.

Kate. *(Breathlessly)* Thank you, Kirsty. This is very exciting; we are actually watching the start of a revolution.

Kate moves back to the left of the performance area and watches as Hippias enters with his advisor from the right, surrounded by his guards who make space for him by roughly pushing the crowd aside. The people react by throwing paper stones at him. His guards then force the crowd to the back of the performance space and stand in front of them to protect Hippias.

Advisor. Sire, I don't think they like you very much.

Hippias. Tell me something new.

Advisor. Well, if you insist um... *(nervously)*.

Hippias. What's wrong, are you scared of me or something?

Advisor. *(Trying to look really brave, but actually frightened)* Me, me, scared, no, never.

Hippias. Good, because unless you tell me the truth I will have you tortured until you do.

Advisor. *(Nervously)* B-b-but, sire, how will you know if I am telling the truth?

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Hippias. Don't worry, I will know. If it is what I want to hear, and I like it, it will be the truth, otherwise I'll kill you. So don't worry. What were you going to tell me?

Advisor. *(Starting slowly, then finishing in a rush)* Well, um, I think that they are planning to kill you.

Hippias. Who? Come on tell me, so I can find them, kill them and hang their heads over the gates for all the citizens to see.

Advisor. Everybody!

Hippias. Who do you mean everybody? There must be a leader.

Advisor. No sire, you are so unpopular all the people are rising up against you.

Hippias. Corkscrews! *(Everyone gives him a funny look)* I have never heard such rot in all my life. Guards take this fool away and hang him.

Kate rushes on to the centre of the performance area, microphone in hand.

Kate. Kirsty, I'm sorry to interrupt, but look!

At this point the crowd become restless and start chanting "Death to Hippias", "We want freedom" and throwing stones at Hippias, while his guards, led by a General, surround him, defend him and slowly clear the performance space, leaving just Hippias, the General and Kate. The advisor disappears into the crowd.

Hippias. Phew that was close!

General. It will keep happening sire. Unless of course you let us hang a few more of um....

Hippias. But every time you hang one, more rebels come onto the streets.

General. I know sire. Great isn't it? We get to kill even more of them. We have worked out some really exciting ways to kill off traitors. It's great *(Looking really happy)*.

Hippias. Oh, next time let me come and watch. I know some really horrible ways to kill traitors. Remember, they don't call me Hippias the Tyrant because I'm a nice guy.

Off the performance area we hear the crowd making more noise, and then more stones are thrown onto the performance area. The General and soldiers exit to

calm the crowd. Hippias starts pacing up and down. Kate rushes up to him and puts her microphone up to his mouth.

Kate. Your Excellency, would you like to comment on the situation?

Hippias. What can I do? They want to kill me. I need to find a way to leave before they kill me. *(Pauses)* I know, if they want to run the state themselves, I'll let them. Let's see how they get on with that.
(Hippias and the guards exit).

Kate. *(Making a funny face)* A dramatic turn of events, and you heard it first on 'The Olympia News Organisation – O-NO'. This is Kate Adieus returning you to the studio.

While Kirsty and Zoe read their reports, the crowd assemble on the performance area, bringing with them a dais which they place at the rear. The guards take up their positions placing two suitcases either side of the dais.

Kirsty. After yesterday's dramatic riots, events today are moving quickly. In a few moments we are expecting His Excellency, Hippias the Tyrant, to address the people.

Zoe. Our reporter Kate Adieus is at the Parthenon so that every dramatic turn in this exciting drama will be brought to you exclusively by 'The Olympia News Organisation – O-NO'. But first we need to take a break to hear from our sponsor.

A cast member dances across the performance area to Greek music carrying a sign that says "Visit Costa's barber shop for the best gossip in Athens".

(PERFORMANCE NOTE: Track 14 on the CD)

Kirsty. I think we are now ready to go over to Kate Adieus.

Kate. Thank you, Kirsty. The tension is building here as we all await the arrival of Hippias the Tyrant. *(Pauses)* I think I can see him now.

The performance area is now full of people, and there is a dais (see Art Pack) at the back with the guards in front of it. Hippias enters and climbs onto the dais.

SONG 2: Everyone Can Have A Vote - Hippias

Hippias. The time has come to make a change to your lives.
The time has come you can decide.
I've got a little plan I think you might like.
This is the thing,
Please give it a try.