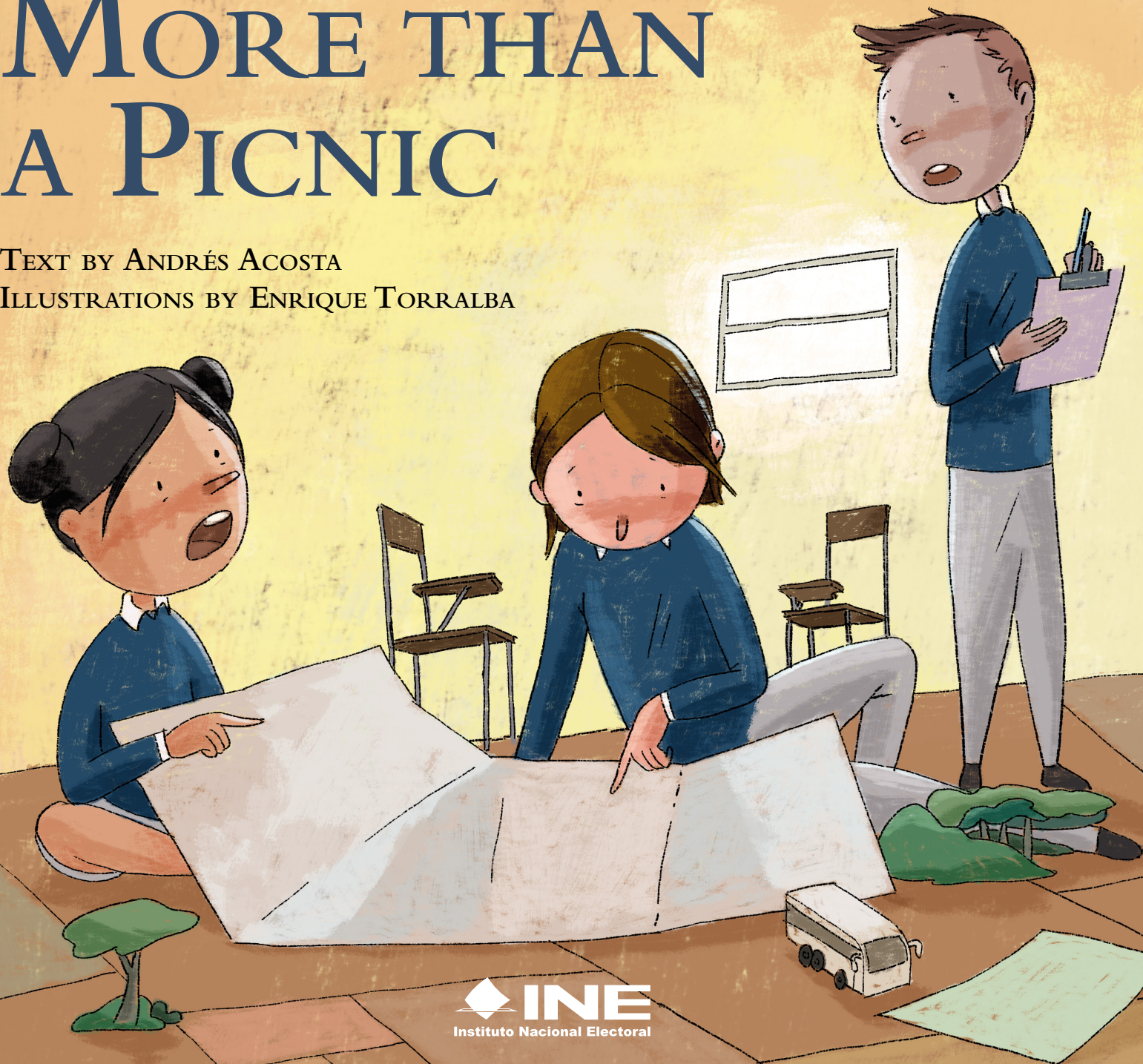


# MORE THAN A PICNIC

TEXT BY ANDRÉS ACOSTA

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ENRIQUE TORRALBA





ANDRÉS ACOSTA was born in Guerrero, in 1964. He is a member of the Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Arte. He has published around forty books, with which he has won international awards such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Cuatrogatos, Novela Juvenil del Fondo Editorial del Estado de México, Premio Latinoamericano de Cuento Benemérito de América, and Premio Valladolid a las Letras. Among the national awards are: El Barco de Vapor, Gran Angular, FeNal-Norma, Juan García Ponce, Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, Josefina Vicens, Juan José Arreola, Edmundo Valadés, Humor Negro and Cuento para Niños of the Feria Internacional del Libro Infantil y Juvenil. He was selected by the Castilla-La Mancha University as one of the twenty-five most relevant Hispanic American authors of youth literature. He has been an artist-in-residence in Colombia, Canada, and Austria. Some of his recent works are: *Yo vencí al Pata Maldita*, *El malabarista inmóvil*, *Vélar el vuelo*, *La sirena y el halcón*, *Su fantasmática presencia*, *#YoSoyBosco*, *Clandestino*, *Acosd@s*, *La flor de Paracelso* and *El club de los fracasados*.

MORE THAN  
A PICNIC

## Instituto Nacional Electoral

President Councilor

Lcda. Guadalupe Taddei Zavala

Electoral Councilors

Mtro. Arturo Castillo Loza

Mtro. Arturo Manuel Chávez López

Mtra. Blanca Yassahara Cruz García

Norma Irene De La Cruz Magaña

Dr. Uuc-kib Espadas Ancona

Mtro. José Martín Fernando Faz Mora

Mtra. Frida Denisse Gómez Puga

Carla Astrid Humphrey Jordan

Mtra. Rita Bell López Vences

Mtro. Jorge Montaña Ventura

Executive Secretary

Dra. Claudia Arlett Espino

Head of Internal Comptrollership Office

Mtro. Víctor Hugo Carvente Contreras

Executive Director of Electoral

Training and Civic Education

Eduardo Ramírez Salazar

**MORE THAN A PICNIC**

First edition in English, 2026

Original title in Spanish: MÁS QUE UN DÍA DE CAMPO

Text: Andrés Acosta

Illustration: Enrique Torralba

Editorial coordination: Teresita Vicencio Álvarez

Translator: Rubén Heredia Vázquez

Copyright © 2026, Instituto Nacional Electoral

Viaducto Tlalpan núm. 100, esquina Periférico Sur,

col. Arenal Tepepan, 14610, Ciudad de México

ISBN complete electronic work in English: 978-607-8870-87-5

ISBN electronic volume in English: 978-607-2604-67-4

Free dissemination. No sale allowed.

# MORE THAN A PICNIC

Text by Andrés Acosta  
Illustrations by Enrique Torralba



# PRESENTATION

*More than a Picnic* is a literary proposal of the **Árbol** collection, which the Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE, National Electoral Institute) offers with the intention of disseminating, in a simple and entertaining way, issues of civic education and democratic values, while contributing to the formation of analytical, critical, and participatory readers.

The purpose of this publication is to inform young people that in Mexico we have a model of democratic organization that seeks the common good, where the action of the State is distributed among three branches: Executive, Legislative and Judicial, as established in our Carta Magna.

The balance of powers established by this form of government guarantees respect for the institutions that Mexican citizens have been building, so it is of great importance to reflect on the counterweights in the representation of authority, the regulatory bodies of our community and, in general, the danger posed by the concentration of power in a single instance.

*More than a Picnic* makes this topic easier to understand through the amusing story of a group of students who face a special challenge and must get organized in a democratic and equitable way, to overcome the difficulties they face and achieve the goal their teacher has set for them. Although the story is intended for teenagers, it can be of interest to people of any age.

The last part of the book includes the section “To Reflect and Discuss”, so that adults, family members and teachers can talk with young readers about the importance of all social actors in our country respecting the provisions of the law. We hope you enjoy it.

## More than a Picnic


*We all know everything together.*

Alfonso Reyes

When Mr. Chávez, the teacher, mentioned the magic word, “picnic,” the whole group went silent. The end of term was approaching and from the teacher’s mouth came only threatening phrases about submitting final papers or doing surprise exams. Suddenly, something that sounded different and promised adventure and fun crept in. The teacher smiled slyly.

“Your final exam will be a picnic. How about that? Now you’re quiet, aren’t you? I’m impressed at how attentive you are!”





“It sounds too good to be true. What’s the catch, Mr. Chávez?” Faustino asked, standing up and stroking his chin.

“No trick. Your grade will depend on how well you put into practice what we have been studying. We’ll see what your own picnic will be like. To begin with, you have a budget that has been collected from the co-op’s sales. You will have to elect a general coordinator and two committees... But, well, you already know that.”

“So, is it an exam or is it just for fun?” Faustino insisted.

“Do you want to have fun and get a good grade at the same time? Well, that’s up to you. From this moment on, you’ll be in charge, you’ll make sure everything goes well I’ll just be an observer. On this sheet, I have written down the amount of money you’ll have at your disposal and the date of your final exam, I mean, the picnic. Well, good luck. Now you can enthrall me!”

Mr. Chávez calmly got up from his seat, picked up his briefcase and went to sit in the back, in the opposite corner of the room. Everyone just stared, open-mouthed. Was he for real? For a few minutes, they just stared at each other.

Faustino got up from his chair and went to the front:

“You heard Mr. Chávez. We have to vote for a general coordinator. Well, I nominate myself.”

There was some laughter, and then someone said in a mocking voice:

“Are you serious?”

“If you vote for me, I promise we will get an A and have the picnic of our lives.”

The whole class burst in laughter.

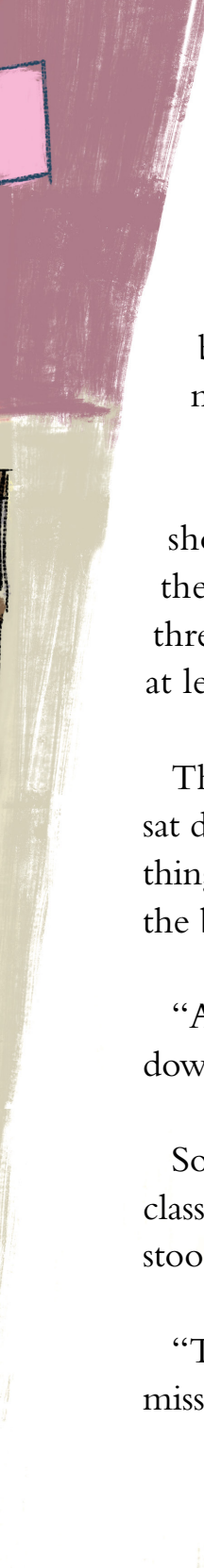
“This is a democracy, isn't it? Anyone can put oneself forward. For example, you can do it if you want to, can't you?”

Valeria, a very determined girl, stood up and spoke.

“Faustino is right. We have to vote. I nominate myself too, but to head the surveillance committee. We need someone to check whoever is coordinating; we need to be alert to their decisions.”







A third person, a tall, thin boy called Edmundo, asked for the floor. He spoke slowly and seemed to think about every syllable he uttered.

“I think that’s fabulous. Just don’t forget we need to set the rules of the game, because if they are not made from the beginning, nothing can go right. I propose myself to head the rules committee.”

So, the three of them went to the front and the majority agreed that they should be the leaders. Each one chose his or her support team, which they did as they were in a football match, according to affinity. The group was divided into three while the teacher watched contentedly from his seat. Things had started well, at least on the first day.

The next morning, when the students arrived, the teacher’s desk looked empty. They sat down, divided into three teams, according to their respective assignments. The first thing Faustino did when he entered the room was to write down the picnic date on the blackboard, circle it and sit in the teacher’s chair.

“As the general coordinator, I’m warning you that we have little time, so let’s get down to work!”

Some people asked what he was talking about, since they had missed the previous class, but the answer was quickly whispered in their ears. Edmundo, in his calm voice, stood up and said:

“The first rule is for each team to make a list of what their duties are, so we don’t miss anything.”

“I propose we first decide the most important thing, that is, where we are going to go on a picnic,” Faustino answered immediately, sticking out his chest.

Then, Edmundo and Faustino got into a small argument. Someone turned to stare at the teacher, looking for a solution, but he just mimed shutting his lips with an invisible zipper. Since the minutes were going by and they were still arguing about what came first, the rules or the place, Valeria stepped in and said that it was even more important to stop arguing and move forward: they simply had to start making plans.

So, they started writing on the blackboard:

Where are we going to go?

How are we going to get there?

What will we take to eat?

What games or competitions will we hold?

What safety measures will we take?

What to do in case of an emergency?

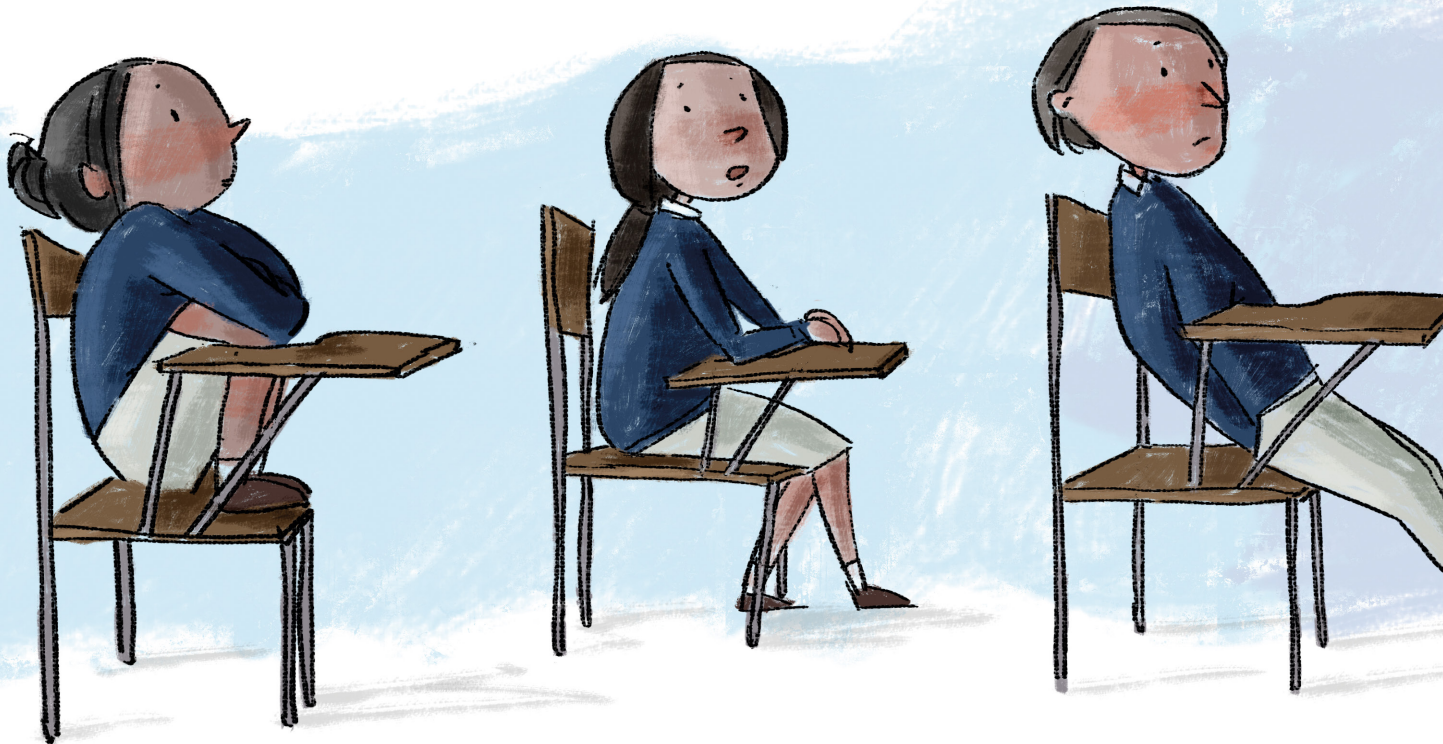
What time will we be back?

In turn, each question brought about more questions; it meant they had to start making decisions and getting down to work. The teams realized that they had too much on their plate.



It was incredibly annoying to plan for a day of fun down to the last detail! After the novelty of the teacher letting them act freely had worn off, they realized that they had to do the best they could, and an atmosphere of disbelief ensued. It didn't seem that entertaining anymore. Had the teacher been pulling their leg? They were used to adults, their mums, dads, teachers, or professors taking care of serious things. Young people only studied or blabbed.

Well, anyway. It was better to organize a picnic than doing a traditional exam, right? They could hold their field day wherever they wanted, but first they had to come to terms. Some proposals were quickly dismissed, such as places that only existed either in films or abroad.



“Whoa! Come on! As much as you love dinosaurs, we can’t go to Jurassic Park, this is real life.”

They ended up choosing the Renacimiento National Park because it had the ideal facilities for a day out, with beautiful natural scenery, and was only an hour and a half’s drive away. That first decision taken together seemed like a triumph, and they celebrated with loud cheers and applause. The teacher was tempted to intervene, but restrained himself in time, as Valeria calmed things down:





“Remember that this is also an exam. We can’t risk being expelled for being noisy. I’m going to ask Edmundo to hurry up and provide us with the rules to keep order, especially made for the picnic.”

Another issue yet to be decided was how they would travel.

“By helicopter!” someone proposed.

“Oh yes, sure!”

“What about our family cars?”

“Not all of our families have cars and, also, they won’t be able to take us because they work anyway. The point is getting there and coming back together.”





Someone suggested taking public transport, as there was a bus route that went to the park, so it would be cheap. But then they realized about the disadvantages; it was going to be difficult for all thirty of them to take the same public bus, apart from the inconvenience of carrying baskets of food and other luggage.

They concluded that they would have to rent a private bus, with its driver and everything. They would have to spend a good part of the budget on that, but it was necessary. Another classmate was commissioned to research the prices so they could decide soon.



They seemed to be agreeing all too easily on everything, but when it came to what they would eat, the complications began. There are hardships in life; and then there is the issue of food in a group of thirty students.

Faustino, who had been silent at the teacher's desk as he watched the class with a faint smile, sprang to his feet and spoke.

“I’ve got great news for you. My uncle has a *torta* shop. I’ve already talked to him and he’s going to make us a selection of his best *torta* sandwiches: beef schnitzel, Cuban-style, Hawaiian-style, and whatever you want. He’s going to give us a special price, how about that?”

“I don’t eat meat,” a girl replied, raising her hand.

“Well, you can have a beans or cheese *torta*.”


“But I don’t eat bread,” another classmate said.

Several people began to propose different foods: tacos, sushi, pizza, and Faustino kept saying “no” to everything; he stated that he, as the general coordinator, had preference in making decisions. Also, he had already talked to his uncle and the class would save a lot of money. Nobody seemed to accept the *torta*-making uncle though. Little by little they began to give their opinions in a disorderly and contentious way. Mr. Chávez was beginning to worry, but he was not supposed to intervene. Then, suddenly, Valeria stood up, went to the front and took the floor.







The background of the page features a stylized illustration of a landscape. On the left, there are green, rounded hills. A grey path or road curves through the scene, leading towards the right. The overall color palette is dominated by greens and greys, with a soft, hazy atmosphere. The text is overlaid on this background.

“Silence, be quiet, please. I’m sorry, Faustino, you may be the general coordinator, but you cannot impose your will alone; we must solve this problem according to our rules. Edmundo, could you tell us what your committee has been working on regarding the food?”

“Sure Valeria. Look, we approached the mother of one of our classmates, who is a nutritionist, and concluded that the picnic menu should be balanced and healthy, but also yummy. We want to show you another proposal we have.”

The menu was put to a vote and some modifications were made, but an extra dessert option was included. Faustino did not like the result, but he had to respect it because the majority had agreed on it. Thus, the group had successfully overcome its first crisis.

The long-awaited day had arrived, the last gathering of the year. All of Mr. Chávez’s students, and the teacher himself, were quite proud. It was a cool morning, and the parents walked their sons and daughters to the school entrance. The rented bus was parked out front, and the bus driver, wearing red motoring gloves, was conscientiously checking the air in the tyres with his silver pressure gauge, as well as the oil in the engine.

Mr. Chávez and Ms. Mendieta, the hall monitor, welcomed the families and discreetly made it clear to them that, although the students had organized the event because it was their final exam, they would be in their care the whole time; they should not worry, as they were committed to their safe return.

The bus driver opened the side compartment and all the students put the baskets with food and fruit there, as well as what they needed to carry out the games and competitions they had planned. Edmundo checked the names of his classmates on his list to make sure that no one was missing. There were all thirty of them. He also posted a sheet with the printed set of rules at the bus door, which included not sticking the head or hands out of the windows, not to distract the driver with small talk, not singing offensive songs, and not using discriminatory language or wearing inappropriate clothing. Edmundo and his team had burned the midnight oil to foresee all the possibilities they had to include in their set of rules to make them perfect. No matter how much he went over it, he always had the feeling that he had left out something important.



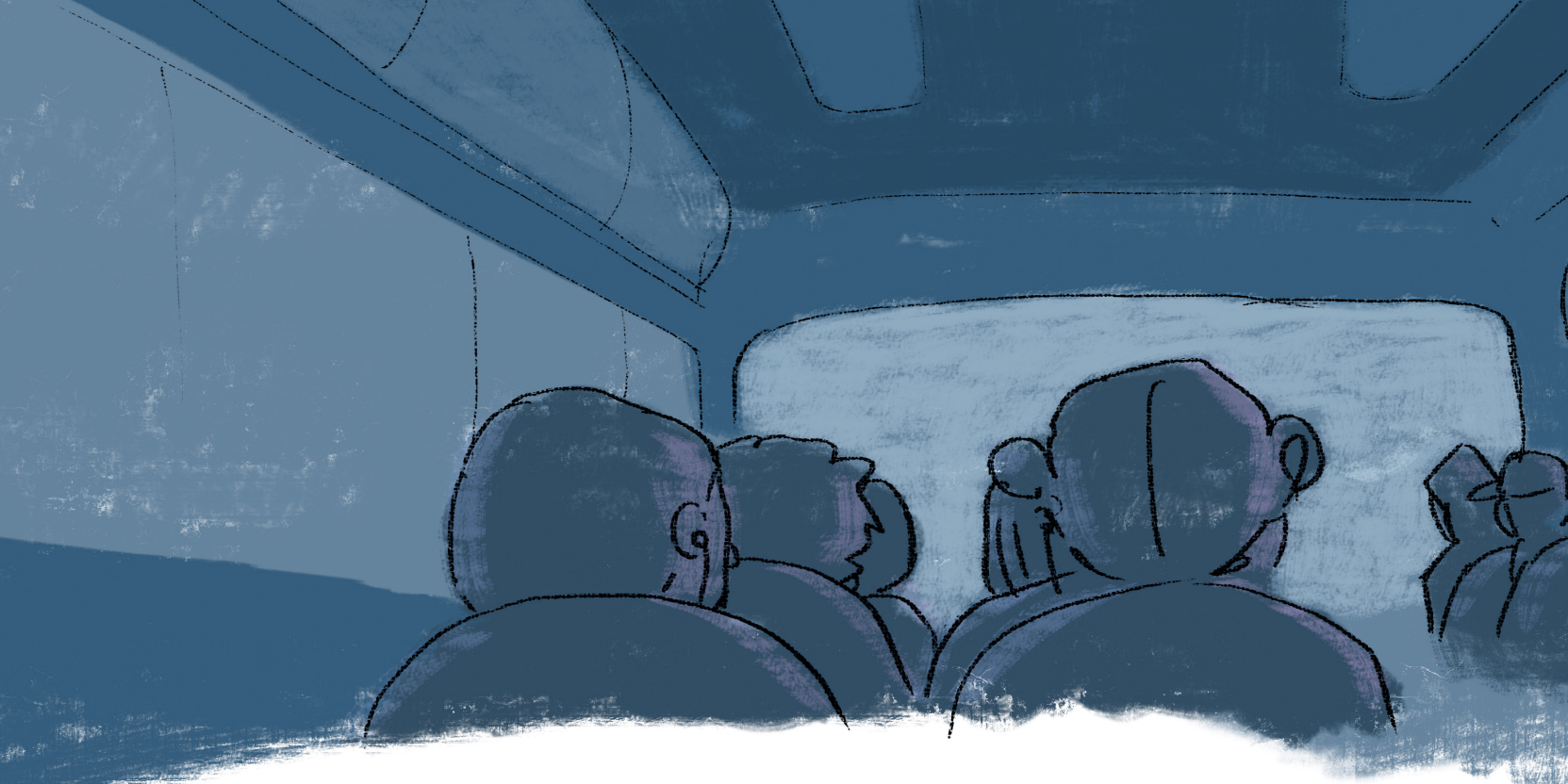
When everyone was in their allotted seat (no one was allowed to travel while standing up) the driver started the engine, put on his cap and drove in reverse gear to head down the avenue. Mums and dads waved goodbye, but no one looked at them because the class was excited to get away from the school and start their farewell outing and final exam at the same time.

The feeling of trying to be attentive to every detail to follow their organizational model and having fun at the same time was kind of strange. They suddenly were a bunch of girls and boys, who hadn't even fully left childhood behind, playing responsible adults, or at least behaving as adults were supposed to behave. From then on, everything they thought of doing they had to think twice about: was that what it meant to be a responsible person?



## Reglamento

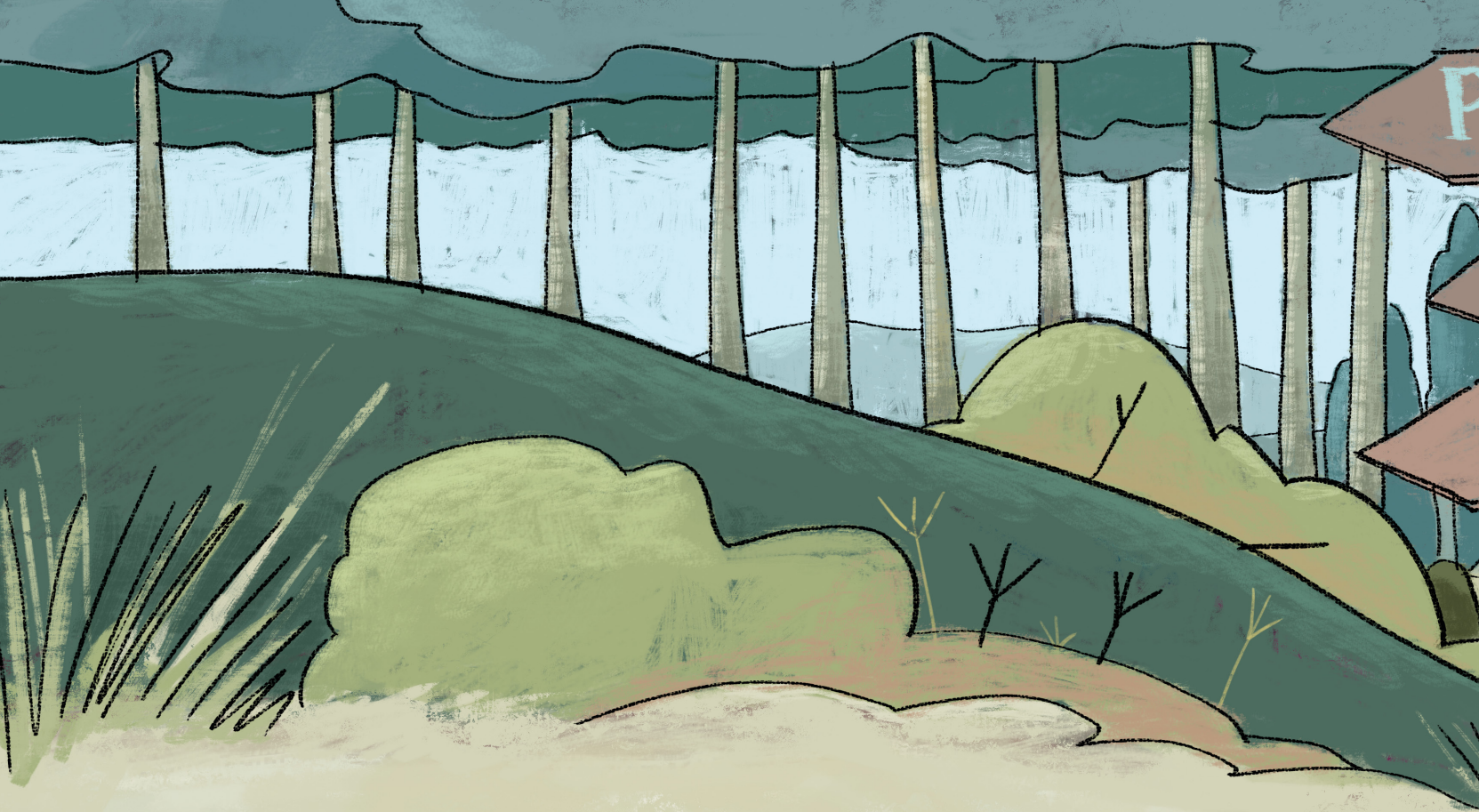
1. ...
2. ...
3. ...
4. ...
5. ...
6. ...
7. ...
8. ...
9. ...
10. ...
11. ...
12. ...
13. ...
14. ...
15. ...



The first thing they wanted to do was to start singing. There was nothing wrong with that, was there? It was just that traveling in a bus as a group and singing perfectly went hand in hand. There were those who began to sing along to one of those usual songs... Then someone started singing a song that made fun of the driver, but they had to stop dead in their tracks and come up with another one; after all, there were plenty of happy songs to go around.

Meanwhile, sitting all the way in the back, a couple of friends, instead of singing, were talking in secret. They seemed to be plotting something. Since the class started planning the field day, those two had done their best to go unnoticed in Faustino's committee. They pretended to be working, but they were just making fun of their classmates, who they deemed as "way too nerdy." Since Faustino was busy trying not to lose control of the organization of the picnic, he did not notice that pair of infiltrators.






The journey through the city to reach the outskirts seemed all too brief to them. The hour and a half drive went by so quickly that they would have gladly gone on for another couple of hours without a fuss while they sang, laughed, and told jokes. The driver had studied the route ahead of time; he didn't take his attention off the road for a second, and he had silky hands, driving the truck as if navigating a calm lake.

When they arrived at the Renacimiento National Park they breathed in the green scent of the countryside, and the electric blue skies did not disappoint. It turned out to be the ideal place for their gathering. Valeria, Faustino, and Edmundo congratulated each other for having made such a good choice. The team preparations, with all their little stumbles, had been well worth the effort. It was now clear to them that this was not just a final exam, but a chance to get away from school and have fun.



At the park's entrance, a large map indicated two different walkable routes to the recreation area, which was halfway up the hill: the easy route and the expert route. Despite the attractions of the latter, such as its abseiling sections and panoramic views, the three organizers agreed that it was wiser to take the former, even though it was longer, as it was necessary to go around the mountain to avoid the slope. They were not prepared to climb rocks, and an accident would ruin their fun. Valeria, Faustino, and Edmundo realized this time they had agreed from the beginning.





In any case, they took the funniest path, because they were so happy they were jumping up and down; some of them were doing somersaults and racing around. They took turns to carry the food baskets. After going around some bushes, they discovered the recreational area. A long wooden table was waiting for them to sit down to eat some fruit and drink some water.

Next, the most eagerly awaited moment came: the competitions. They started with the sack races and the game of pulling apples out of the water with their mouths; and then came the volleyball match.

Mr. Chávez was so proud of his students that he could not help boasting to Ms. Mendieta:

“Just look at how beautiful is that, my girls and boys are building their own happiness.”

The hall monitor smiled; the students were behaving so well they were making her job easy. However, she raised an eyebrow and replied:

“I wouldn’t be too confident, Mr. Chávez; with groups of kids you never know, you have to always be on your guard.”

True, things don’t always turn out as perfectly as you’d like. In the most entertaining part of the competitions, and apparently without anyone noticing, a couple of silhouettes walked backwards through the clearing towards where the bushes were thicker, and there they disappeared, in the direction of the darkening pines.

Thanks to Valeria's overzealous monitoring, she was the first to suspect that something wasn't quite right. Something smelled strange in the air, but what was it? Suddenly, she turned pale, her heart skipped a beat, and she asked Edmundo to count them all, which he did immediately. Despite the fact that no one would stand still, he counted to twenty-eight. What did he mean, twenty-eight? They had to check the toilets and look around before alarming the others. Edmundo went to get the list to see who was missing. Valeria rushed to tell Faustino. It was not possible that when everything was going so well, a problem came up.

"Are you sure?" Faustino asked.

"They don't seem to be anywhere. I've already called them to their mobile phones," Edmundo said, "but there's no signal here."

"I can't believe how irresponsible you all are! How could you not realize they were gone?" he replied.

"The ones who are missing are Tomás and Ricardo. They always sit together and in the back, don't they?"

"Hey, Faustino, weren't they in your commission?" Valeria asked.

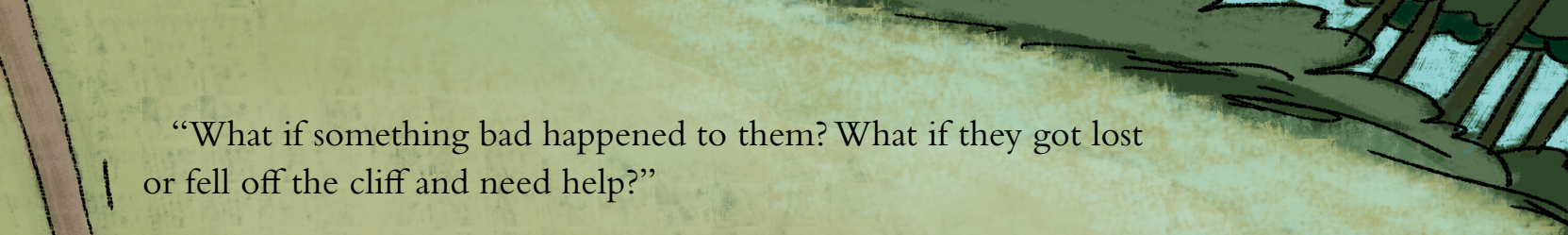
"Well, yes, they were. We have to look for them, don't we?"

"We have to tell the teacher!"

"No, wait, we can't do that! That would lower our grade," Faustino said.







“What if something bad happened to them? What if they got lost or fell off the cliff and need help?”

They didn't even have to reach the teacher because, ever attentive to what was going on with his students, he and the hall monitor, noticing their worried attitudes, rushed over and there they were informed about the situation.

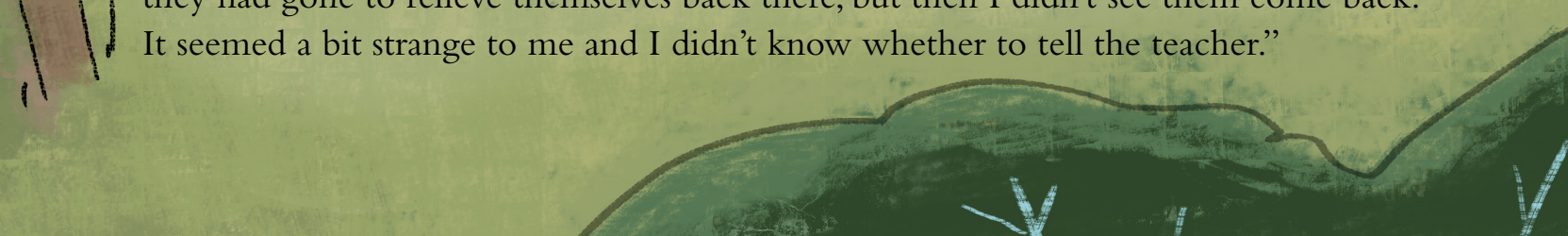
“I warned you, Mr. Chávez,” Ms. Mendieta said triumphantly.

“We have to notify the authorities as soon as possible so they can carry out a search. You three, who are the heads of the committees, find out if anyone saw anything, and don't let anyone wander off, so that we don't end up with any more strays. Am I clear?”

Faustino, Valeria and Edmundo were determined to solve the emergency. They each called their respective team together and asked them about Tomás and Ricardo to trace their movements from the beginning, and if anyone had seen them for the last time. And, yes, they found out the two had always been together and had arrived at the site with the others but had not taken part in any of the competitions.

Seeing the commotion that was forming, the bus driver, who had stayed under a small roof to get some fresh air and meditate calmly, but without losing any detail of what the group was doing, approached. When he heard what was going on, he said to them:

“Well, I've got to tell you I saw those two kids sneaking out a while ago, while you were out having your competitions. I thought that, as the bathroom was occupied, they had gone to relieve themselves back there, but then I didn't see them come back. It seemed a bit strange to me and I didn't know whether to tell the teacher.”





“Which way did they go exactly?”

The driver led the trio of youngsters to the exact spot. There they made their way through the undergrowth, and it wasn't long before they found a small clearing where the two boys were lying in the grass, snoring noisily. There they were!, completely unconcerned, while a revolution was taking place in the group.

When they returned to the site, the park chief warden was already dictating instructions over his radio. When he saw the youngsters approaching, he called off the search, which had just begun. Mr. Chávez went ahead to meet them:


“But where were you, eh?”

“There, just there, Mr. Chávez, taking a little nap.”

“You approved your own regulations, which clearly state that no one can leave the group,” and then he turned to the committees' coordinators. “What are you going to do about it?”





A stylized illustration of a forest scene. A light-colored path winds through the center of the frame. On the left, there are green bushes and a tree trunk. On the right, there are more green bushes and a tree trunk. The background is a light blue sky with some faint, sketchy lines suggesting distant trees or hills. The overall style is simple and artistic, using soft colors and visible brushstrokes.

Valeria frowned and answered:

“Well, Mr. Chávez, it deserves some form of punishment. The monitoring committee I head has to meet in order to decide what the penalty will be for breaking this rule,” she turned to the pair of friends. “What can you say in your defense? Why did you do it? Because of you, our perfect picnic was interrupted and we had to notify the authorities.”

Tomás raised his shoulders and replied:

“It’s no big deal, we wanted to pretend to be missing because it’s part of a challenge we saw on social media. It was just a joke, but nothing happened.”


“You put yourselves and the whole group in danger!”

Fortunately there was still time to resume the last part of the get-together, and the group, now complete again, gathered around the table to share the tasty and balanced menu that awaited them.

A stunning sunset in the forest bode farewell to those who had visited the park. Together they headed to the park entrance and boarded the bus, but not before making sure that all the thirty students were there, safe, and well. They traveled together for the last time and sang non-stop. They realized that organising the near-perfect picnic was not about getting a passing grade, but something far more important: the common good of their group.

The following Monday, the committees met with Mr. Chávez to present their report. The monitoring committee, headed by Valeria, determined that the disciplinary punishment for those who hid on purpose had to be something that would teach them to become more integrated into the group. So they were sentenced to





community work at the school; after all, there was a lot of cleaning up to do, and also a lot of pending preparation for the final report card day, on which, according to the teacher, they were not going to do badly at all.

# TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS



# Balance of Powers

The type of government of our country is defined in our Constitution as a “representative, democratic, secular and federal republic.” These characteristics take us back to the French Revolution and its thinkers, as the first historical phenomenon that rebelled against an absolutist and totalitarian regime. And, precisely, to bring to life the postulates of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the construction of a representative democratic republic was required. This legacy came from Europe and is the starting point in our continent for the model of political organization that in our independence process developed over the decades and up to today.

Thus, in a democratic and representative republic, there is no room for unipersonal authoritarianism, power cannot be concentrated in a single man or woman. History has proven that the types of government in which the decisions of one person, or a small group, are imposed, sooner or later end up committing injustices.

This story is an account of the organization of a field day of Mr. Chávez’s school group, that can be used to reflect on the most important issue that guarantees that the whole architecture of government is in accordance with the distribution of power. This is what is established on Article 49 of our Carta Magna: “The Supreme Power of the Federation is divided for its exercise in Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches.”

But let’s see how this school group is organized:



Faustino got up from his chair and went to the front:

“You heard Mr. Chávez. We have to vote for a general coordinator. Well, I nominate myself.”

“If you vote for me, I promise we will get an A and have the picnic of our lives.”

“This is a democracy, isn’t it? Anyone can put oneself forward. For example, you can do it if you want to, can’t you?”

This general coordinator would have the ultimate responsibility for carrying out the necessary tasks to ensure the success of the field day. Similarly, in our country, the Executive Branch must implement all the actions required to guarantee that Mexicans have a life in accordance with the human rights established in the Constitution. This power is headed by the President of the Republic:

#### Article 80

“The exercise of the Supreme Executive Power of the Union is deposited in a single individual, who shall be called ‘President of the United Mexican States’, who shall serve as head of Government and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.”



The Federal Executive Branch oversees designing, planning, and executing a country's project. It directs, coordinates, plans, and implements government actions. It is elected through our vote.

Let's go back to the field day: for it to work properly, it is not only necessary to have someone organizing how the tasks will be carried out. Edmundo realizes that it is not enough to have a coordination team responsible for the preparations, but that they should act according to a normative framework; that is, they do not decide based on individual criteria but on those that are collectively voted as the best for the entire group:

“I think that's fabulous. Just don't forget we need to set the rules of the game, because if they are not made from the beginning, nothing can go right.”

And precisely for this purpose, in Mexico we elect those who represent us in the Legislative Branch: deputies and senators, who make up the Congress in the federal government, or the state congresses or municipal councils. In short, the multiple bodies instituted to draft the laws and regulations that govern all citizens, including of course, the people who work at the different levels of government. This is established in the Constitution:

#### Article 57

“The following are powers of the Congress: I. To issue, reform and repeal laws and decrees for the good government of the State and the constant economic, social, and cultural improvement of the people.”



Now, in these first proposals for group organization, in addition to Faustino and Edmundo, Valeria also takes part:

“I nominate myself too, but to head the surveillance committee. We need someone to check whoever is coordinating; we need to be alert to their decisions.”

Similarly, as a third branch of government, our system of political organization in Mexico establishes the Judicial Power:

#### Article 94

“The exercise of the Judicial Power of the Federation is vested in a Supreme Court of Justice, an Electoral Tribunal, Regional Plenary Courts, Collegiate Circuit Courts, Collegiate Appellate Courts, and District Courts.”

The Judiciary is responsible for ensuring compliance with the law. It deals with the resolution of conflicts that arise in society, both between public authorities and between individuals, for which it follows the dictates of the Constitution or the corresponding legal system.

Having assumed almost intuitively the convenience that for the good of an organization there must be three powers, it soon became clear to the students of Mr. Chávez that no one could arrogate the possession of the absolute truth. And this is precisely the spirit of a presidential constitutional system: no power may trample, threaten, or reduce the other powers.



So, the three of them went to the front and the majority agreed that they should be the leaders. Each one chose his or her support team...

In successive sessions, the group began to organize where they would go, how they would travel, what the menu for the meal would be. And when Faustino seemed to impose the idea that the caterer would be his uncle and everyone was discussing it, the voice of Valeria, from the surveillance committee, was heard:

“... I’m sorry, Faustino, you may be the general coordinator, but you cannot impose your will alone; we must solve this problem according to our rules. Edmundo, could you tell us what your committee has been working on regarding the food?”

This is exactly how it should be in a democratic republic: it is the duty of the Executive Branch to act based on the Constitution and the laws. Should this fail, it is up to the Judicial Branch, which in the story is represented by Valeria, to ensure that the principle of legality is complied with according to the guidelines; for the field day, Edmundo’s team acts as the Legislative Branch.

So, the day of the tour finally arrived and everything went according to plan. But suddenly, the responsibility of the surveillance committee (i.e., the Judiciary in this story) became even more explicit when it had to confront two transgressors: Tomás and Ricardo, who separated from the group to pretend to be missing.



“You approved your own regulations, which clearly state that no one can leave the group.”

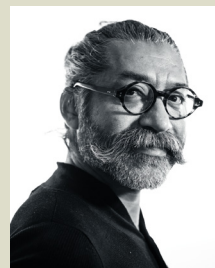
“Well, Mr. Chávez, it deserves some form of punishment. The monitoring committee I head has to meet in order to decide what the penalty will be for breaking this rule.”

Thanks to the fact that the members of the organization were duly elected or appropriately appointed, and that they acted responsibly and respectfully, the field day experience was very positive and enjoyable, despite possible adversities. As it happened between the protagonists of this story, the public exercise of powers presupposes a natural balance according to the constitutional principle as an irreplaceable factor: distributing the various state functions in several institutional repositories. The balance of constitutional powers rests on democracy, and this is a tangible fact that is conquered and pursued daily as a form of coexistence. It is essential that children and young adults in Mexico understand this.



*MORE THAN A PICNIC*

The Bembo Std font family was used.



ENRIQUE TORRALBA studied Graphic Design at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana. He specializes in children's and youth literature and has been recognized with the Críticos en Ciernes Award in the Fantasmas y Escapes International Illustration Contest in 2008, organized by the Associazione Culturale Teatrio, Venecia, in Italy. He also won the first place in the 16th Catalogue of Illustrators of Children's Publications, Conaculta in 2006. He received the Design Award in Illustration category in 2010, honorable mentions in the second and third Ibero-American Illustration Catalogue, as well as being selected twice in the Bratislava Biennial and in the Illustration Contest of the Book Fair of the United Arab Emirates. He was selected to represent Mexico at the Paris Book Fair in 2009 and at the Quebec Book Fair in 2010, he was invited to the 28th and 31st International Exhibition for Children in Sàrmede, Italy, in 2009 and 2012. He had solo exhibitions at the Museo de la Ciudad de Querétaro in 2009 and 2011.

Among the 40 books he has illustrated are: *Quisiera ser un león*, *El fraile y el alacrán*, *Para Nina*, *ABC para un mundo nuevo*, *Un lugar en el mundo, ¿Quién teme...?*, *Vocabulario-Kabbahla*, *Y ahora somos dos*, *Gregorio, un abuelo sabio*, and *El último cuento*.

*Extraña* is his first book as author and illustrator (Santillana, 2023).



Mr. Chávez has set a challenge for his group: They will take a very important but totally different exam. They have the chance to have fun and get a good grade, but first they must get organized, and they must respect the rules of the game so that it is fair and democratic ... Will they succeed?

Through this story, readers can have fun and understand the importance of the balance of powers in a democratic society in search of the common good.

This volume is part of the **Árbol** collection, which seeks to contribute to the civic culture of children and teenagers through attractive stories that encourage reflection and participation in society.