

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 of *The Chocolate War* opens with Brother Leon cheerfully conducting a roll call, a stark contrast to the turmoil experienced by The Goober. While Brother Leon takes pleasure in his role as the orchestrator of the chocolate sale, using it as an opportunity to stir school spirit and create unity among students, The Goober is wrestling with deeper emotional issues. The memory of the Room Nineteen incident continues to haunt him, leaving him in a state of shock and depression. Initially, The Goober had been seen as an accidental hero by his peers for his involvement, but over time, this status faded, and he found himself more isolated. Rumors started to circulate, causing a divide between him and his classmates. The Goober is left to grapple with a sense of guilt, unsure of how to face the ongoing consequences of the incident.

As Brother Leon calls out the names of his students, The Goober grows increasingly nervous, feeling the weight of the room's scrutiny. Every roll call intensifies his anxiety, and the expectations of having to sell fifty boxes of chocolates weigh heavily on him. Despite his fear and discomfort, he reluctantly accepts the task, seeing it as a way to avoid further attention. However, his mind constantly drifts back to the guilt he feels from the Room Nineteen incident, particularly in regard to Brother Eugene's fate. The repair of Room Nineteen does little to soothe his conscience; rather, it serves as a grim reminder of the emotional and physical consequences that came with the event. His mind is consumed by this guilt, and the chocolate sale has become yet another symbol of the weight of his actions. It becomes increasingly clear that The Goober's internal struggles, particularly his feelings of shame and isolation, will have lasting consequences on his ability to engage in the community around him.

A turning point arrives when Brother Leon calls upon Jerry Renault, a student who has become a focal point for defiance. In a moment of surprise, Jerry rejects the chocolate

sale altogether, refusing to participate in an act that has become mandatory for everyone else. This refusal shocks the entire classroom, including The Goober, who watches in disbelief as the tension builds. Jerry's bold decision to stand firm is a clear act of rebellion, one that directly challenges both Brother Leon's authority and the established norms of the school. The classroom falls into an intense silence as everyone processes what Jerry's defiance means for the dynamic of their relationships with authority. Brother Leon's reaction, though initially masked by an attempt to maintain control, reveals his own vulnerability as he struggles to regain the upper hand. Jerry's simple yet powerful act of resistance serves as a stark reminder of the power of individual choices to disrupt even the most controlled environments.

As the class is dismissed, Brother Leon's unsettling smile, which he attempts to maintain, symbolizes the divide between those who comply with authority and those who resist it. The scene illustrates the emotional complexities of the students, with some complying and others, like Jerry, openly rejecting the expectations placed on them. For The Goober, this moment marks a painful realization that compliance with authority might come at the cost of his own integrity. His inner turmoil deepens as he questions where his own place is within this divided school system, where personal desires and social pressures collide. The chapter concludes by highlighting the growing emotional landscape within the classroom, with tension building around the themes of individuality, conformity, and rebellion. The Goober's internal conflict and Jerry's public defiance set the stage for further examination of authority, loyalty, and personal sacrifice, making it clear that the pressure to conform will continue to shape the students' journeys in ways they cannot yet fully understand.