

# Chapter 36

Chapter 36 of *The Chocolate War* centers on Archie Costello's thrill as he orchestrates a controversial and sinister event—a fight between Renault and Janza, fueled by a raffle. The idea behind the raffle, with its brutal concept, taps into the darker emotions of greed and cruelty, elements that Archie believes are prevalent in his peers. As he looks over the raffle tickets, filled out by eager students betting on their chosen fighter, Archie is filled with a sense of power. The growing excitement around the fight, with tickets quickly selling out, confirms the control he holds over the situation. This moment underscores his manipulation of the students, as they eagerly comply with his orchestrated chaos, creating a spectacle driven by their desires for vicarious excitement and violence. The thrill of the event feeds into Archie's sense of dominance, as he recognizes the ease with which he can stir the crowd's emotions.

Meanwhile, Carter, another student caught up in the event, grapples with conflicting feelings about participating in the raffle. While the excitement of the fight draws him in, he begins to feel uncomfortable with Archie's worldview that people are inherently greedy and cruel. Carter's inner conflict deepens as he questions whether he has also been manipulated, reflecting on his own motivations for being a part of the crowd. The thrill of the spectacle, however, clouds his judgment, and he finds himself torn between his ethical discomfort and the allure of the event. The struggle within Carter reveals a key theme in the chapter: the corrupting power of peer pressure and the ease with which people can be drawn into morally questionable actions. As the tension builds and Carter's self-doubt intensifies, he becomes further entangled in Archie's web of control.

As the much-anticipated fight draws near, the drama heightens when Obie introduces the black box, a significant device that could decide the outcome of the event. This black box, filled with marbles, represents the uncertain fate of the two contestants,

and Archie approaches it with the confidence of someone who believes he controls the outcome. Unbeknownst to him, however, Obie and Carter have secretly conspired to undermine his certainty, planning to inject suspense and tension into the process. Archie, fully immersed in his sense of control, dismisses any notion of losing, oblivious to the fact that others are working behind the scenes to challenge his dominance. This plot twist adds a layer of unpredictability to the situation, as it plays into the larger theme of manipulation and power that runs throughout the story. The black box becomes a symbol not only of fate but also of the uncertain nature of the power Archie holds over others, suggesting that even those in control can be taken by surprise.

The climax of the chapter occurs when Archie swiftly draws the marbles, a move that shocks both the audience and Obie. He successfully draws white marbles, securing his victory and bolstering his confidence in his ability to manipulate situations to his advantage. His triumphant moment in front of the crowd serves to reinforce his image as the mastermind behind the event, feeding into his self-assured persona. The crowd's reaction to Archie's manipulation underscores the darker side of human nature, where people are willing to be complicit in violence and cruelty for entertainment. The chapter's conclusion highlights the themes of power and control, as Archie stands victorious, further cementing his position as the puppeteer who remains in control of the situation. His unwavering self-confidence, even in the face of potential rebellion, illustrates the dangerous allure of unchecked power and the moral decay that comes with it. Through Archie's actions and the tense atmosphere of the event, the chapter explores the complexities of manipulation, peer pressure, and the inherent darkness within human nature.