

Chapter 27

Chapter 27 of *The Chocolate War* reveals a pivotal moment for Archie Costello and The Vigils when Frankie Rollo, a rebellious junior, refuses to comply with their expectations. Rollo, known for his insolence, dismisses Archie's authority in a defiant and carefree manner, surprising everyone around him. This moment of defiance catches Archie off guard, as he has never encountered such resistance before. The tension in the room rises sharply when Carter, another member of The Vigils, loses control and strikes Rollo after he mocks their ability to instill fear. Rollo, now subdued, is quickly thrown out of the meeting, and the room erupts in cheers. This reaction frustrates Archie, who had intended to use Rollo as a source of amusement rather than a challenge to his authority. This conflict marks a significant shift, showing that even Archie's carefully controlled environment is starting to unravel.

After Rollo is ejected, Carter steps forward, emphasizing that The Vigils cannot allow individuals like him to disrupt their credibility. He argues that the group's association with the chocolate sale has brought their efforts under scrutiny, and Rollo's defiance is a sign that their influence is weakening. Meanwhile, Obie, another member of the group, presents a poster that crudely expresses dissent, with the message "SCREW THE CHOCOLATES AND SCREW THE VIGILS." This poster reflects growing frustration and resistance among the student body, highlighting the increasing opposition to both the chocolate sale and the power structure that The Vigils represent. The mood shifts as the group realizes they are facing more than just logistical challenges; their hold on the school is being questioned. As tension builds within The Vigils, the members begin to feel the weight of their actions, and their unity starts to crack.

Carter's frustration with Archie intensifies, and he confronts him directly, suggesting that Archie is partly to blame for the group's current predicament. He casts doubt on Archie's ability to maintain control over the situation, forcing Archie to defend his

leadership. Despite the cracks in his authority, Archie maintains his composure and begins to devise a new strategy to regain control. His plan is to make selling the chocolates more enticing, leveraging influential students to help push the sale forward. Though some, including Obie, question the effectiveness of this plan, Archie is determined that it will succeed. He believes that the success of the chocolate sale will not only restore the group's power but also help him manage the growing rebellion symbolized by Rollo. Archie's confidence masks his underlying anxiety, as he knows that failure would significantly undermine his position within The Vigils and the school. However, he remains convinced that his ability to manipulate the students and control the narrative will secure his victory.

The conflict between Archie and Carter remains tense, particularly when Carter places Archie on probation concerning the success of the chocolate sale. This further highlights the shifting dynamics within The Vigils and the increasing pressure on Archie to deliver. Archie, internally seething with resentment, forces a smile to mask his humiliation, aware that the failure of the chocolate sale could mark the end of his dominance. Despite the growing animosity and uncertainty, Archie continues to push forward with his plan, confident that he can rally the school behind the sale. His goal is clear: neutralize the rebellious influence of Jerry Renault and reassert The Vigils' control over the students. By reframing the challenges as mere obstacles, Archie aims to preserve his status and keep the school under his thumb, ensuring that the appearance of success will overshadow the cracks in the group's structure. This chapter highlights Archie's tactical mind, his ability to manipulate situations, and the rising tension as his leadership faces increasing challenges.