

Chapter 29

Chapter 29 of *The Chocolate War* follows Brian Cochran as he becomes deeply involved in the process of tallying the sales results for the chocolate campaign. The initial excitement he feels is intense, as the numbers climb rapidly, and he finds himself caught in the thrill of the campaign's success. With chocolates rapidly becoming the newest trend in the school, Brian feels a rush of accomplishment as he watches the sales figures increase. However, the sudden and inexplicable surge in sales doesn't escape his notice. Rumors about The Vigils' involvement in rallying students to sell chocolates spread through the school, yet Brian remains uninvolved with their methods. He does, however, observe how certain members are keeping track of the students who haven't sold enough chocolates and warning them, which suggests that coercion may be at play. This underlying tension hints at a darker force controlling the excitement surrounding the sale, a reality that Brian remains acutely aware of but unsure how to challenge.

Throughout the day, Brian is constantly updating the sales figures on the board, responding to the intense atmosphere in the assembly hall. The students' enthusiasm and energy escalate as the sales figures are posted, with many students canvassing the local neighborhood and even approaching local businesses in an attempt to hit their quotas. The space becomes filled with anticipation and energy as each student eagerly looks at the board to see their progress. Brian, while caught up in the frenzy, begins to feel more uncomfortable as the fairness of the credit distribution becomes increasingly questionable. Carter, who is head of The Vigils, submits a large sum of money, claiming it's from seventy-five boxes sold, though Brian knows this isn't possible. Despite Brian's discomfort, he feels compelled to comply with Carter's request to allocate credits to students who didn't make those sales. This action begins to weigh on him, as he realizes that he is enabling a dishonest system but rationalizes

that it's not his place to question the process. His discomfort with the moral ambiguity of the situation grows, but he continues with his task, aware that any resistance may come with consequences.

As the day unfolds, Brian is stuck in a dilemma between his role as a facilitator of the campaign and his growing doubts about its integrity. Although Brian remains silent about his suspicions, the growing tension he feels shows through in the way he handles the sales figures. Carter's commendation of his work, for the moment, provides some relief, lifting Brian's spirits temporarily, but the lingering unease about the unfairness of the credit allocation sticks with him. His internal conflict intensifies as the day ends, with Brian realizing that the sale has evolved into something more than just a fundraising event; it has become a battle of power, manipulation, and control. When the final tally is announced, the total number of chocolates sold reaches a staggering fifteen thousand and ten boxes, a figure that excites everyone involved. Brother Leon, who is overseeing the entire campaign, shares in Brian's excitement, and for the first time, he addresses Brian by his first name, further cementing the strange camaraderie that has developed. The applause that follows only adds to Brian's discomfort, as he stands in the center of the spotlight, a key player in a campaign built on deception. While the recognition feels good, it also serves as a reminder of the moral compromises that have been made for the sake of success. The chapter concludes by highlighting the toll that manipulation, power, and blind ambition take on individuals, as Brian's moment of triumph is overshadowed by the ethical questions surrounding the campaign. The narrative underscores the psychological burden carried by those who willingly participate in morally ambiguous situations, and the unsettling reality of being complicit in something that doesn't align with personal values.