

Chapter 30

Chapter 30 of *The Chocolate War* delves deeper into the manipulative dynamics at play within the school as Brother Leon continues his relentless chocolate roll call. While the students have already reported their sales directly to Brian Cochran, Leon enjoys the dramatic flair of announcing each student's sales figures in front of the entire class. He creates a spectacle out of the event, particularly by falsely praising Hartnett, who is said to have sold fifteen boxes, even though he hasn't sold any. This moment highlights Leon's sadistic enjoyment of power and his manipulation of the students, who are left to navigate the complexities of competition, pressure, and deceit. The Goober, a sympathetic character, watches this unfold with growing discomfort, deciding to stop selling chocolates entirely in support of Jerry, whose own refusal to participate has sparked a sense of solidarity. Goober's decision to cease selling, leaving his total stuck at twenty-seven boxes, serves as a quiet act of resistance, showing his internal struggle with the injustice surrounding the sale.

As the roll call continues, Goober's discomfort grows as he fakes enthusiasm while his classmates, like Parmentier, are praised for their efforts. The attention around the raffle and the sales builds, adding an electric sense of competition to the atmosphere. When Jerry's name is called, the whole class seems to hold their breath, eagerly awaiting his response. Leon, sensing the importance of this moment, speaks in a tone that almost sounds melodious, clearly anticipating a reaction from Jerry that aligns with the group's expectations. However, Jerry takes a stand and refuses to participate, firmly declaring that he will not sell the chocolates. This moment of defiance acts as a powerful rejection of the pressure and expectations placed upon him by both the school and his peers. Jerry's resistance stands as a quiet yet firm rebellion against the bullying and manipulation that have become so normalized in their environment. His choice to reject the sale is not just about chocolates, but about standing up to a

system that seeks to control individuals through peer pressure and social norms.

In the aftermath of Jerry's refusal, the tension in the room increases, and the atmosphere becomes more hostile. Harold Darcy, another student, challenges Jerry's decision, questioning why he refuses to participate when everyone else is complying with the rules. This challenge is not just an inquiry but a subtle form of peer pressure, seeking to force Jerry back into line. Jerry responds calmly, asserting that participation in the sale is voluntary, which only fuels the resentment and anger among his classmates. His calm stance becomes a powerful rejection of the false unity being created by the school's manipulative tactics. As Jerry holds his ground, he is met with increasing hostility from his peers, marking the moment where his courage to stand alone becomes the source of his isolation. The bell rings to signal the end of the class, but Jerry's walk to the door feels heavy with the weight of the alienation he now faces. The peers who once saw him as part of their group now treat him with disdain, reinforcing the emotional toll of standing up for what's right in a world that values conformity.

Later in the assembly hall, Goober is shocked when his name is called, and the announcer praises him for selling fifty boxes of chocolates, a number far beyond what he actually sold. Goober, who had made the choice to stop selling chocolates in solidarity with Jerry, now finds himself the recipient of praise for an achievement that isn't his own. The cheers from the crowd are a stark contrast to his internal turmoil, and he feels trapped in a situation where the praise only exacerbates his guilt. Goober's sense of betrayal intensifies as he realizes that by conforming to the expectations of his peers, he has lost something valuable—his sense of integrity. This internal conflict continues to weigh on him as he walks toward his locker, fighting back tears. The external validation from his classmates feels hollow, and Goober struggles to reconcile the pressure to fit in with the nagging feeling that he has betrayed his true values. Despite the overwhelming praise, Goober refuses to see himself as weak or cowardly, but the emotional weight of his actions leaves him questioning his loyalty to both Jerry and the values he once held dear.

This chapter highlights the immense psychological pressure placed on the students at Trinity, as well as the moral complexities of conformity and individual defiance. Both Jerry and Goober are forced to navigate their personal convictions in a setting that constantly reinforces the importance of submission to peer pressure. Jerry's courage to stand up for his beliefs in the face of overwhelming hostility serves as a powerful testament to his character, even though it isolates him from his peers. Meanwhile, Goober's internal conflict demonstrates the cost of conformity and the emotional strain of maintaining one's integrity in a world that values success and submission over personal morals. The chapter effectively illustrates the toll that manipulation and peer pressure can have on individuals, as well as the emotional battles that are fought silently behind the scenes.