

Chapter Thirty-seven

In Chapter Thirty-Seven of "The Chocolate War," Goober arrives at a chaotic scene at the school's stadium, filled with classmates transformed into strangers. He had hesitated to attend, wrestling with feelings of guilt and an internal struggle over witnessing Jerry's impending humiliation in a fight that pitted him against Janza. Despite laying sick in bed for days—either from physical illness or a guilty conscience—he reluctantly made his way to the spectacle against the protests of his parents.

As the fight begins, the atmosphere is electric, with Carter explaining the unsettling rules. The crowd's anticipation is palpable, urging the fighters on. Jerry finds himself caught between the expectations of his peers and his own reluctance to hurt Janza—even after the bullying he endured. When Jerry finally strikes, his punch merely grazes Janza, prompting boos from the crowd.

Crowd frenzy escalates as Janza, enraged, lands a savage blow on Jerry, causing him to reel backward. Despite the throbbing pain, Jerry waits for his chance to retaliate. When it arrives, he unexpectedly lands a strong hit on Janza, surprising himself with the adrenaline rush. The tables momentarily seem to turn, as he temporarily gains confidence and feels empowered by striking back.

Carter's next command leads to chaos when he instructs Janza to deliver an illegal blow—a low punch intended to incapacitate Jerry. The crowd, unaware of the rule violation, continues urging Janza on, resulting in overwhelming violence as he rains down fists on a helpless Jerry. The Goober, horrified, agonizes over the scene and recognizes that the crowd craves bloodshed.

The climax unfolds as Jerry, now severely injured, collapses under the relentless assault. In a surreal moment, the lights suddenly go out just as he hits the ground, plunging the stadium into darkness. In that instant, the bleak reality of their situation sinks in, symbolized by the chaos and brutality witnessed. As Obie experiences disgust and a sense of foreboding, he glimpses Brother Leon above the scene, suggesting a dark orchestration behind the violence. Meanwhile, Archie navigates through the resulting pandemonium, dealing with the aftermath of the power outage and the chaos it incited .