

Chapter Thirty-six

****Chapter Thirty-Six Summary:****

In this pivotal chapter of "The Chocolate War," Archie Costello revels in the excitement of a raffle he's orchestrated, which involves a fight between two students, Renault and Janza. The concept is sinfully captivating, appealing to the greed and cruelty that Archie identifies in his peers. As he inspects the raffle tickets filled out by students desperate to root for their chosen fighter, he feels a sense of control and authority, relishing the submissiveness of others. The audience's anticipation for the fight intensifies, and Archie is pleased to see that the tickets are selling out rapidly, confirming his manipulation of the situation.

Carter, a fellow student, recognizes the appeal of the fight as he grapples with his mixed feelings about joining in. The deeper conflict arises as Carter is troubled by Archie's perspective that people are inherently greedy and cruel, questioning if he too has succumbed to these traits. Despite his discomfort, he enjoys the thrill of the event that Archie has orchestrated, pushing him further into self-doubt.

As the fight approaches, the tension crescendos when Obie presents the legendary black box, a device that could determine Archie's fate in the fight, since he must draw marbles for the two contestants. Archie, with confidence in his luck, approaches the box, dismissing any thoughts of losing control. Unbeknownst to him, Obie and Carter have planned for this moment to infuse suspense and drama into the event, attempting to undermine Archie's confidence.

The ceremony culminates in Archie drawing marbles in a swift action that surprises both the audience and Obie. He successfully draws white marbles, fueling his bravado as he faces the crowd, further embedding himself into the role of the puppeteer who continues to manipulate those around him without hesitation. The chapter explores themes of power, control, and the darker aspects of human nature, encapsulating the unsettling atmosphere of the event while emphasizing Archie's unwavering self-assurance.