

# Chapter Twenty-five

In Chapter Twenty-Five of "The Chocolate War," Jerry Renault finds himself summoned before The Vigils, an intimidating group at Trinity High School. The meeting kicks off with a peculiar, ransom note-style summons that sets a childish yet threatening tone, typical of Archie Costello's manipulation. As Jerry enters a storage room filled with the echoes of boys playing sports in the nearby gym, the atmosphere thickens with tension as Archie, seated at a table adorned with the school's colors, presents a box of chocolates.

Archie's interaction with Jerry is laced with mockery and psychological games. After inviting Jerry to partake in a chocolate, Archie abruptly pivots the discussion to Jerry's failure to sell the chocolates for a school fundraiser. Jerry's protests and explanations of his reluctance to participate in the chocolate sale lead to a confrontational atmosphere, filled with laughter and teasing from the other members of The Vigils. They call out numbers, bragging about their sales, creating a stark contrast to Jerry's admission of zero sales.

Archie refuses to acknowledge Jerry's personal reasons for noncompliance, asserting that The Vigils operate without secrets, thrusting Jerry into an uncomfortable spotlight. As Jerry contemplates the recent positive developments in his life—football, school, and a girl named Ellen Barrett—he feels a profound sense of dread and hopelessness during the meeting.

In a climactic turn, Archie delivers an ultimatum: Jerry must accept the chocolates and sell them. Obie, another Vigil member, secretly revels in watching Jerry stand up to Archie, realizing that Jerry is unlikely to comply. The chapter concludes as Archie dismisses the meeting, leaving Jerry vulnerable while hinting at unresolved tensions between individual desires and the group's demands, framed within the overlapping themes of peer pressure and personal integrity. Jerry's quiet defiance foreshadows impending conflict, establishing a pivotal moment in the narrative where he must decide between acquiescence and resistance.