

Chapter Twenty-one

In Chapter Twenty-One of "The Chocolate War," Kevin Chartier attempts to sell chocolates after school but faces failure, having sold nothing after visiting seven houses. Disheartened, he calls his friend Danny Arcangelo, only to learn that Danny only managed to sell one box to his aunt, who is diabetic. They joke about their predicament, and Kevin expresses admiration for a freshman named Renault, who has refused to sell the chocolates, thinking maybe Renault is correct in rejecting the assignment.

As their conversation unfolds, they reflect on the selling pressure placed on students like them by their school, Trinity, and the Vigils—an influential group. Kevin worries about what the Vigils, with whom he might be involved next year, will do concerning Renault's rebellion. Meanwhile, Howie Anderson, a respected student, declares his refusal to sell chocolates too, emphasizing the principle behind the decision. Encouraged by Howie's stance, Richy Rondell expresses his agreement and suggests a meeting might be called to officially declare their solidarity in refusing the chocolate sale.

The chapter shifts to focus on Archie Costello, who waits in the gym for Obie, who arrives theatrically. Obie shares alarming news about Renault's ongoing refusal to sell chocolates, which some students attribute to the Vigils. This defiance poses a challenge, as it is an affront to their authority. Obie notes the mixed reactions among students, with some still conforming to the chocolate-selling assignment.

Archie contemplates the situation, weighing his options regarding possible Vigils' involvement and the implications of Renault's actions. He decides to orchestrate a meeting with Renault to assess the chocolate sale's status. This leads to the realization that the Vigils are already implicated in Renault's refusal, given their original assignment to him. The chapter closes with a tension-filled atmosphere as Archie plots next steps, aware of the potential consequences of Renault's defiance.