

Study Guide for Robert Cormier's The Chocolate War

Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* is a classic work of young adult literature that explores the themes of conformity, rebellion, and the power of peer pressure. The novel follows the story of Jerry Renault, a high school student who is forced to participate in a violent fundraising competition known as the Chocolate War. As Jerry struggles to resist the temptations of conformity and violence, he learns about the importance of standing up for what is right, even when it is difficult.

This study guide provides a comprehensive summary of *The Chocolate War*, including a detailed analysis of its characters, themes, and symbolism. It also includes a number of discussion questions and essay prompts that can be used to help students understand the novel's complex themes.

The Chocolate War takes place at Trinity School, a private Catholic high school for boys. The school is run by a strict administration that enforces a code of silence and obedience. Students who break the rules are punished severely.



Study Guide for Robert Cormier's The Chocolate War (Course Hero Study Guides) by Samesh Ramjattan

★★★★★ 5 out of 5
Language : English
File size : 1035 KB
Screen Reader : Supported
Print length : 34 pages
Lending : Enabled
Paperback : 198 pages
Item Weight : 12.6 ounces

Dimensions : 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches



Jerry Renault is a new student at Trinity School. He is a quiet and introspective boy who does not fit in with the other students. Jerry is quickly targeted by the Vigils, a secret society that enforces the rules of Trinity School. The Vigils force Jerry to participate in the Chocolate War, a fundraising competition in which the students are divided into two teams and compete to sell the most boxes of chocolate.

The Chocolate War is a violent and brutal competition. The students are encouraged to use any means necessary to sell chocolate, including cheating, stealing, and violence. Jerry is disgusted by the Chocolate War, but he is afraid to speak out against it.

As the Chocolate War progresses, Jerry learns more about the Vigils and their power over the students of Trinity School. He also learns more about himself and his own beliefs. Jerry eventually decides that he cannot participate in the Chocolate War any longer. He refuses to sell chocolate, and he tries to convince other students to do the same.

Jerry's actions anger the Vigils. They threaten him and try to force him to participate in the Chocolate War. Jerry stands up to the Vigils, and he refuses to be intimidated.

The Chocolate War ends in a bloody riot. The students of Trinity School finally rebel against the Vigils and their oppressive rule. Jerry is injured in

the riot, but he is alive. He has learned the importance of standing up for what is right, even when it is difficult.

- **Jerry Renault:** Jerry is the protagonist of *The Chocolate War*. He is a quiet and introspective boy who does not fit in with the other students at Trinity School. Jerry is forced to participate in the Chocolate War, but he refuses to be corrupted by it.
- **The Vigils:** The Vigils are a secret society that enforces the rules of Trinity School. The Vigils are led by Archie Costello, a ruthless and violent boy. The Vigils use fear and intimidation to keep the students of Trinity School in line.
- **Brother Leon:** Brother Leon is the principal of Trinity School. He is a strict and unforgiving man who believes that obedience is the most important virtue. Brother Leon is a symbol of the oppressive authority that the students of Trinity School must endure.
- **Archie Costello:** Archie Costello is the leader of the Vigils. He is a ruthless and violent boy who uses fear and intimidation to keep the students of Trinity School in line. Archie is a symbol of the evil that can exist in the hearts of men.
- **Emile Janza:** Emile Janza is a mysterious and enigmatic boy who is rumored to be the true leader of the Vigils. Emile is a symbol of the unknown forces that can shape our lives.
- **Conformity:** *The Chocolate War* is a story about the dangers of conformity. The students of Trinity School are forced to conform to the rules of the Vigils, even if they do not agree with them. This conformity leads to violence and oppression.

- **Rebellion:** The Chocolate War is also a story about the power of rebellion. Jerry Renault is the one student who refuses to conform to the rules of the Vigils. His rebellion inspires the other students to stand up for what they believe in.
- **The Power of Choice:** The Chocolate War is a story about the power of choice. The students of Trinity School are faced with a choice: they can either conform to the rules of the Vigils or they can rebel. Jerry Renault chooses to rebel, and his choice inspires the other students to do the same.
- **The Chocolate War:** The Chocolate War is a symbol of the struggle between good and evil. The students who sell chocolate are corrupted by the violence and greed of the competition. Jerry Renault, who refuses to sell chocolate, represents the hope of a better world.
- **The Vigils:** The Vigils are a symbol of the oppressive authority that can exist in society. The Vigils use fear and intimidation to keep the students of Trinity School in line.
- **Brother Leon:** Brother Leon is a symbol of the religious hypocrisy that can exist in society. Brother Leon preaches about the importance of obedience, but he is willing to use violence to enforce his rules.
- **Archie Costello:** Archie Costello is a symbol of the evil that can exist in the hearts of men. Archie is a ruthless and violent boy who takes pleasure in hurting others.
- What are the dangers of conformity?
- What is the power of rebellion?
- What is the importance of making choices?

- What is the symbolism of the Chocolate War?
- What is the symbolism of the Vigils?
- What is the symbolism of Brother Leon?
- What is the symbolism of Archie Costello?
- Discuss the dangers of conformity and the power of rebellion in The Chocolate War.
- Analyze the symbolism of the Chocolate War, the Vigils, Brother Leon, and Archie Costello.
- Examine the theme of choice in The Chocolate War. How do the characters' choices shape their lives?
- Compare and contrast the characters of Jerry Renault and Archie Costello.

The Chocolate War is a powerful and thought-provoking novel that explores the complex themes of conformity, rebellion, and the power of choice. The novel's characters are complex and believable, and its symbolism is rich and evocative. The Chocolate War is a must-read for any student of literature.



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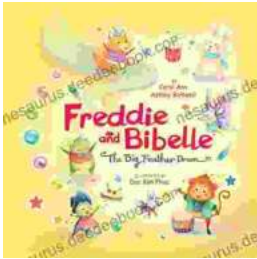
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