

SYNOPSIS

In "Beyond the Chocolate War" we see Archie Costello at the height of his power. He is the assigner for the semi-secret Vigils who control Trinity High School. Even the headmaster, Brother Leon is careful about what he says to Archie. You can never quite figure out what Archie thinks. He is always cool, always one step ahead of his opponent.

His three main supporters are Obie, Carter and Bunting. Obie is the secretary for the Vigils. This is a very important job. He keeps a notebook filled with details about every Trinity student. Archie uses it to give out the assignments. Carter is president of the Vigils. He is also captain of the football team. Bunting is just a sophomore and is eager to please Archie in any way he can. His goal is to be the assigner after Archie graduates.

Brother Leon is very anxious for this year to be a good one at Trinity. A cloud hangs over the school because of the violence that accompanied last year's chocolate sale—the school's big fund raiser.

A boy named Jerry Renault was very badly beaten by Emile Janza in a boxing mis-match. It had all been set up by the Vigils because Jerry wouldn't sell any candy.

Even though Brother Leon is on guard Archie still makes plans to upset the headmaster. His big plan is to have every boy except one skip school the day the Bishop is to make his annual visit. This will embarrass Brother Leon and show him that the Vigils are in control.

The plan seems well on its way to success. However, Carter has second thoughts. He decides to tip off Brother Leon. He sends him a letter saying, "It is imperative to cancel the Bishop's visit to Trinity." Brother Leon shows Archie the letter. Archie plays it cool and says it's not the Vigils who planned this, it's another group; a group who is trying to make the Vigils look bad. Archie leaves the meeting with one burning desire. Find out who the traitor is. The prank is called off.

Things are getting a little unsettled for Archie. His right-hand man, Obie has discovered girls. He is in love with a girl named Laurie. A result of this is less interest in the Vigils. Naturally, Archie doesn't approve. In an offhand remark he says to Bunting, "We'll have to do something about that girl." Bunting takes it literally. Without asking Bunting sets up a trap for Obie and Laurie at a favorite parking spot. It is an ugly near rape situation. Archie is furious with Bunting. Obie is trying to find out who did it. Archie has his two top lieutenants in situations that are explosive to the Vigils.

Obie is on a search for a loafer that has a distinctive tear in it. The boy who held him during Laurie's attack wore

such a loafer. All the boys at Trinity wear loafers. After a long search he spots the torn loafer. When he confronts the boy, the boy lies and says it was a Vigil assignment given out by Archie. Obie vows to get even with Archie. He asks Carter to help him out and he agrees. The plan centers around the Fair Day at the end of the year.

Obie has befriended a new boy, Ray Bannister. He has a hobby of doing magic tricks. Obie learns how to do sleight of hand. He uses it to deposit all black marbles in the box that Archie draws from. This insures that Archie will draw the black marble—the first time it ever happened to him and he must play the fool on Fair Day. The boys are afraid to knock Archie into the dunking tank or kick him as the sign on the fool's back says. However, Obie gets his chance during the class skit. Archie must put his neck under the guillotine. Obie actually plans to murder Archie before the whole school. It almost works, but a safety catch that Obie doesn't know about saves Archie.

Archie again plays it cool and tells Obie, "You got guts. You were really going to kill me." He also lets Carter know that he'll get him sometime, somewhere for being a traitor.

Bunting gets his wish. He'll be the assigner next year. Even here Archie has the last laugh. He makes Bunting take Emile as his second in command. Emile has all kinds of crazy ideas; ideas given him by Archie.

Two important secondary themes are also part of the story:

One is the return of Jerry Renault to town. He has recovered physically from his beating by Emile. In a very dramatic meeting he faces Emile again. Emile beats him up but loses because of Jerry's new inner strength. He has now psychologically recovered. He plans to return to Trinity next year.

The second theme is a troubled honor student, David Caroni. He never got a poor grade in his life until Brother Leon give him an undeserved "F." It ruins David. He starts to fail all his classes. He attempts to murder Brother Leon during Fair Day. The attempt fails and he commits suicide.

SETTING

Trinity High School—a small (400 students) boys college prep school in New England. The school is run by a religious order of Brothers.

CHARACTERS

Brother Leon—the Headmaster

Archie Costello—the assigner—he controls the Vigils

BEYOND THE CHOCOLATE WAR

Obie—secretary for the Vigils

Laurie—Obie's girlfriend

Ray Bannister—a new Trinity student—he is into magic

Jerry Renault—has recovered from his beating and has returned home

Bunting—a sophomore Vigil, eager to move up in the Vigils

Carter—president of the Vigils

Goober—Jerry Renault's best friend

Emile Janza—a real animal

David Caroni—an honor student with mental problems

Jill Morton—Archie's girlfriend

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Cormier, one of America's leading authors of young adult fiction, began his career as a newspaper reporter more than twenty-five years ago. He has twice received the Associated Press award for the Best News Story in New England and has been involved in all phases of journalism.

Mr. Cormier's first novel for young adults, *The Chocolate War*, received resounding critical acclaim and is now recognized as a landmark in young adult literature. The best-selling novels that followed, *I Am the Cheese*, *After the First Death*, and *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway*, have all been honored as ALA Best Books for Young Adults. Mr. Cormier is also the author of three novels for adults and a collection of short stories, *8 Plus 1*.

Mr. Cormier and his wife, Connie, live in Leonminster, Massachusetts. They have a son and three daughters.

CRITIC'S CORNER

"A story with a highly serious message not only about the usurpation and misuse of power but about power's inevitable staying . . . Masterfully structured and rich in theme; the action is well crafted, well timed, suspenseful; complex ideas develop and unfold with clarity . . . An ideal study for the high school classroom."

—*The New York Times*

"The characterizations of all the boys are superb, and Cormier is especially sharp in showing the boys' relationship to and manipulation of each other . . . Unique in its uncompromising portrait of human cruelty and conformity."

—*School Library Journal* (Starred)

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To discuss the theme of teenage conformity.
2. To trace Jerry Renault's recovery and triumph over Emile Janza and the Vigils.
3. To determine the effectiveness of moving the point of view among the characters.
4. To study what made Obie and Carter finally turn against Archie.

5. Contrast student life at Trinity with a public school.
6. To analyze what motivates Archie to do the things he does.

MEANING STUDY

Below are words and phrases that have particular meaning in the book. Explain the meaning each has in *Beyond the Chocolate War*.

1. levitation
(the ability to move an object into the air using only your mind.)
2. guillotine
(an instrument for cutting off a person's head by means of a heavy blade.)
3. incredulous
(not able to believe.)
4. improvisation
(to make up as you go along.)
5. Fair Day
(an end of the year tradition at Trinity High School. Games, rides and skits are part of the day.)
6. black box
(contained six marbles—five white, one black—if the black marble is picked you take the assignment.)
7. assignment
(a task you must complete for the Vigils.)
8. bushwhacker
(spotlights used to scare people on lover's lane.)
9. diocese
(a geographical church district.)
10. The Talking Church
(a quiet peaceful church in Quebec where Jerry Renault would go to pray. He said the wind made it seem like it was talking to him.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. Provide the defense of your opinions with references taken from the book.

1. Where is Monument and what is it like?
(Monument is a town in New England. It is described as "a dull and ugly mill town of drab tenement houses and grim factories with no class at all.")
2. Why do you think that Brother Leon, who was the headmaster, let Archie get away with so much?
(The situation got out of hand. Brother Leon allowed the Vigils to go on in return for their keeping everything under control. When Brother Leon got caught short in the big candy sale, he asked Archie for the Vigils' support. He got the support, but lost whatever respect he held before.)

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3. You have just been named Headmaster at Trinity. Your job is to get rid of the Vigils. How would you go about doing this?
(Answers will vary)
4. If you were Jerry Renault, how would you have handled the situation upon your return to Monument?
(Answers will vary)
5. How do the only two girls in the story, Laurie and Jill, play important roles?
*(Laurie is Obie's girlfriend and her attack by members of the Vigils leads Obie to decide to get even with Archie.
Jill is Archie's girlfriend and his great weakness for her leads him to tell her too many personal things.)*
6. Tell me what these words mean: Fair Day, black box, bushwhacker.
*(Fair Day—Big end of the year festival at Trinity.
Black Box—At each Vigil meeting Archie would draw out a marble. If it was black, he had to carry out the assignment.
Bushwhacker—Boys with powerful flashlights who spied on people in Lover's Lane.)*
7. You have become the assigner. Give out three assignments. None of them can involve violence, destruction or pulling down a person's self-image. Good luck and be creative!
(Answers will vary)
8. What did Goober mean when he said, "I offered up myself as an evening sacrifice."?
(This was after his meeting with his old best friend, Jerry Renault. Jerry was very depressed. He hardly spoke. Goober felt that it was his fault. He could have stopped the fight that injured Jerry. After the meeting Goober went out jogging very hard, and he kept saying he offered himself in Jerry's place as a sacrifice.)
9. Describe what was to happen on the day the Bishop would visit.
(Everyone would skip school. They would not tell their parents. One student would attend. He would act as if nothing was wrong. He alone would attend the Mass the Bishop would say.)
10. Predict the problems you think Bunting will have next year as the assigner.
(Answers will vary)

COMPREHENSION GUIDE

- Literal**—Questions 1, 6, 9
Interpretive—Questions 2, 8
Critical—Questions 4, 5
Creative—Questions 3, 7, 10

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. You are a freshman at Trinity. The Vigils want you to join their "club." Write a one page personal reaction to the offer and look at both sides of the issue.
2. Draw a picture of what Fair Day is like on the grounds of Trinity High School.
3. Interview a psychologist about the Vigils. Ask questions about how such a group can get such a powerful hold on people.
4. Write a newspaper or TV report on David Caroni's suicide. Stick to the facts, not what you feel happened.
5. Have different members of the class play parts of the Vigils. Have a Vigils' meeting where members take sides for and against Archie.

TEACHING NOTES

BEYOND THE CHOCOLATE WAR

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: True or False (20 points)

In the space provided write **T**, if the statement is *completely* true. Write **F** if *any* part of the statement is false.

- _____ 1. Brother Leon has been headmaster for 15 years.
- _____ 2. Ray Bannister used to live on Cape Cod.
- _____ 3. Carter is Captain of the basketball team.
- _____ 4. Archie never gets a black marble.
- _____ 5. Obie's girlfriend is Jill.
- _____ 6. Carter hated his jock image.
- _____ 7. Bunting wants to be the assigner next year.
- _____ 8. The Bishop's visit to Trinity goes very well.
- _____ 9. Harley took care of Laurie.
- _____ 10. The Vigils' board is right across from Brother Leon's office.

Part II: Sequence (10 points)

The five events listed below are scrambled. In the space preceding the numbers, write the letters of the events in the order in which they occurred.

- _____ 1. (a) Bunting gathers information about Laurie.
- _____ 2. (b) Laurie is attacked.
- _____ 3. (c) Ray Bannister moves to Monument.
- _____ 4. (d) Jerry and Goober are friends again.
- _____ 5. (e) Brother Eugene has died.

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Complete each of the following statements with the best answer. Indicate your choice by writing the letter of appropriate response in the space provided.

- _____ 1. The story takes place in (a) the midwest (b) New England (c) the West (d) the South.
- _____ 2. Jerry Renault had been beaten up by (a) Carter (b) Obie (c) Archie (d) Janza.
- _____ 3. The "Talking Church" is located in (a) Monument (b) Trinity (c) Quebec (d) New England.
- _____ 4. Which of these committed suicide? (a) David (b) Jerry (c) Leon (d) Daniel.
- _____ 5. What hit Brother Leon in the face? (a) a peach (b) a plum (c) a tomato (d) an egg.
- _____ 6. Obie planned to kill Archie (a) in room 19 (b) in the parking lot (c) during a school Mass (d) at a Fair Day skit.
- _____ 7. For getting the black marble Archie had to (a) skip school (b) wear a kick me sign (c) bring Jill to school (d) make up with Brother Leon.
- _____ 8. Tubs' assignment was (a) to gain weight (b) to lose weight (c) to dunk Archie (d) to attack Laurie.
- _____ 9. Fair Day was sometimes called (a) Fools Day (b) Free Day (c) Fun Day (d) Food Day.
- _____ 10. Archie's girlfriend's name is (a) Jane (b) Janice (c) Jackie (d) Jill.

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Part IV: Character Match (20 points)

Place the letter of the character in front of the number which matches.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| _____ 1. Secretary of Vigils. | a. Leon | f. Archie |
| _____ 2. Headmaster. | b. Bunting | g. David Caroni |
| _____ 3. President of Vigils. | c. Ray Bannister | h. Obie |
| _____ 4. Honor student. | d. Carter | i. Jerry Renault |
| _____ 5. Into magic. | e. Laurie | j. Emile |
| _____ 6. Has returned to Monument. | | |
| _____ 7. Was assaulted by Vigils. | | |
| _____ 8. The assigner. | | |
| _____ 9. A sophomore Vigil. | | |
| _____ 10. A real animal. | | |

Part V: Essay Questions (10 points each—30 points)

1. Why do you think Brother Leon let Archie get away with so much?
2. You have just been named Headmaster at Trinity. Your job is to get rid of the Vigils. How will you go about doing this?
3. What did Goober mean when he said, "I offer up myself as an evening sacrifice."?

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COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: True or False (20 points)

In the space provided write **T** if the statement is *completely* true. Write **F** if any part of the statement is false.

- _____ 1. Archie is president of the Vigils.
- _____ 2. Ray Bannister is a loner.
- _____ 3. Boxing has been banned at Trinity.
- _____ 4. The black box has five white marbles.
- _____ 5. Obie has discovered girls.
- _____ 6. Brother Eugene never recovered from the shock of Room 19.
- _____ 7. Jerry Renault wants to talk about last year with Goober.
- _____ 8. David Caroni is out to get Brother Leon.
- _____ 9. Cornacchio took care of Laurie.
- _____ 10. David Caroni shot Brother Leon at a school assembly.

Part II: Sequence (10 points)

The five events listed below are scrambled. In the space preceding the numbers, write the letters of the events in the order in which they occurred.

- _____ 1. (a) Archie won't give Bunting an alibi.
- _____ 2. (b) Obie has fallen in love.
- _____ 3. (c) Goober visits Jerry.
- _____ 4. (d) Brother Leon shows Archie the letter.
- _____ 5. (c) Archie gives Tubs an assignment.

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Complete each of the following statements with the best answer. Indicate your choice by writing the letter of appropriate response in the space provided.

- _____ 1. Monument is described as (a) beautiful (b) wild (c) ugly (d) crowded.
- _____ 2. Janza had beaten up (a) Carter (b) Archie (c) Jerry (d) Leon.
- _____ 3. Jerry recovered in (a) Canada (b) New England (c) Monument (d) at home.
- _____ 4. Who does Archie make Bunting take for an assistant? (a) Harley (b) Goober (c) Cornacchio (d) Janza.
- _____ 5. This person was elected class president for hitting Brother Leon with a tomato (a) Jerry Renault (b) Ray Bannister (c) Henry Malloran (d) David Caroni.
- _____ 6. Brother Leon was almost killed because (a) he was so mean (b) he gave an "F" grade (c) he knew too much (d) the Vigils wanted him removed.
- _____ 7. This person knew his friendship with Goober was over. (a) Jerry (b) Leon (c) David (d) Jill.
- _____ 8. David's commands came to him from (a) his mother (b) Archie (c) his piano (d) Brother Leon.
- _____ 9. Ray's secret project is (a) a gun (b) a guillotine (c) sleight of hand (d) dunking chair.
- _____ 10. Archie knows the traitor is (a) Emile (b) Goober (c) Harley (d) Carter.

BEYOND THE CHOCOLATE WAR

COMPREHENSION TEST A ANSWER KEY

Part I: True or False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. T |
| 3. F | 8. F |
| 4. F | 9. T |
| 5. F | 10. T |

Part II: Sequence (10 points)

- c
- e
- a
- b
- d

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. d |
| 2. d | 7. b |
| 3. c | 8. a |
| 4. a | 9. a |
| 5. c | 10. d |

Part IV: Character Match (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. h | 6. i |
| 2. a | 7. e |
| 3. d | 8. f |
| 4. g | 9. b |
| 5. c | 10. j |

Part V: Essay Questions (30 points)

- See Comprehension Question No. 2—in Study Guide.
- Answers will vary—the most creative get highest points.
- See Comprehension Question No. 8—in Study guide.

COMPREHENSION TEST B ANSWER KEY

Part I: True or False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. F |
| 3. T | 8. T |
| 4. T | 9. F |
| 5. T | 10. F |

Part II: Sequence (10 points)

- b
- c
- d
- a
- e

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. b |
| 2. c | 7. a |
| 3. a | 8. c |
| 4. d | 9. b |
| 5. c | 10. d |

Part IV: Character Match (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. g | 6. j |
| 2. b | 7. c |
| 3. d | 8. h |
| 4. a | 9. e |
| 5. f | 10. i |

Part V: Essay Questions (30 points)

- Answers will vary.
- See Comprehension Question No. 9—in Study Guide.
- See Comprehension Question No. 5—in Study Guide.



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